THE GOSPEL OF ST. PAUL

THE GOSPEL OF ST. PAUL

BY SYDNEY CAVE, M.A., D.D.

A REINTERPRETATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE RELIGION OF HIS AGE AND MODERN MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE

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GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
1929

Made and Printed in Great Britain for Hodder and Stoughton Limited
by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

TO

A. B.

IN GRATITUDE

PREFACE

THE special standpoint of this book is described in the Introduction. It is an attempt to present the Gospel of St. Paul as that of a missionary of the first century who expressed his message in terms of the world-view of his age. The writer owes much to those scholars who in recent years have made possible the study of St. Paul's environment. Some of these scholars refuse to recognize the distinctiveness of St. Paul's conception of Christianity, and would have us derive not only the form but the content of his Gospel from the beliefs and practices of the Græco-Orientalism of his time. To the writer it seems that this is a confusion of form with content which could not have arisen if these scholars had been able to check the results of their studies by observation of the present contact of Christianity with non-Christian religions. The writer found when in India how closely the paganism to which he had to seek to relate his Christian teaching resembled that of St. Paul's age, whilst the problems which emerged in dealing with immature converts differed little from those with which St. Paul had to deal. It is the purpose of this book to bring together these two sources of knowledge: the researches of specialist scholars, and the experience which may be gained from modern missionary work.

In view of the similarity of the description of St.

Paul's message of salvation here given with that to be found in Dr. C. A. A. Scott's *Christianity according to St. Paul*, it should perhaps be stated that the first four chapters of this book were already written before the publication of that illuminating and authoritative work.

It is the writer's pleasant duty to express his deep indebtedness to the Rev. H. Maldwyn Hughes, D.D., Principal of Wesley House, and to the Rev. E. W. Johnson, B.D., Tutor of Cheshunt College, who read the book in MS. and made many valuable suggestions; and to Mr. B. L. Manning, Fellow of Jesus College, who helped in the revision of the proofs.

CHESHUNT COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

March, 1928.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Apoc. and Pseud.	*The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* edited by R. H. Charles
Exp. . .	*The Expositor*
Exp. G. T. .	*The Expositor's Greek Testament*
H.B.N.T. .	*Handbuch zum Neuen Testament* edited by H. Lietzmann
I.C.C. . .	*International Critical Commentary*
J.T.S. . .	*The Journal of Theological Studies*
M. . . .	Dr. Moffatt's Translation of the New Testament
N.K.Z. . .	*Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*
S.N.T. . .	*Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*
Z.T.K. . .	*Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*

The edition used is shown by an index number. Its date is given only when first quoted.

INTRODUCTION

NO leader of the early Church aroused in his own lifetime so much devotion and so much hostility as did St. Paul. And that is still his fate. There are those who find in his words the most moving expression of their own experience. There are others who turn from him with aversion, not because they are indifferent to Christianity, but because they feel that St. Paul's teaching is a perversion of the simpler message of his Master. The writer of the Epistle to Galatians must always seem uncongenial to those trained in popular Roman piety, and it is not surprising that in the Roman Church St. Paul should have such little place in men's affections. But even in the Protestant Churches his influence is less than once it was. Some of the causes for this are not hard to find. It was Luther's rediscovery of St. Paul's teaching on justification by faith alone which first made the Reformation, whilst it was to St. Paul, as interpreted through St. Augustine, that Calvin owed his overwhelming sense of the sovereignty of God. The Protestant theologians of the succeeding age identified St. Paul's teaching with the Reformation interpretations of him, and, treating his vivid phrases as if they were the technical terms of a formal theology, elaborated from them massive systems, which had in them many elements of grandeur, but which became, in

the hands of lesser men, tyrannies very hard to be endured. For these systems St. Paul has been wrongly, but not unnaturally, held to be responsible. Thus, by a strange irony, the Apostle who, in his lifetime, suffered much for Christian liberty, is regarded by many as the enemy of spiritual freedom, and this man, who was no systematizer, is disliked as the author of a complex 'Paulinism' which he himself would not have understood, and which belongs, not to his age, but to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It is only as St. Paul is studied as a man of the first century that he can be understood. Our Lord spoke, for the most part, in words of inimitable simplicity, and many of His parables and sayings have a freshness and a charm which transcend the limits of time and place, so that they are as intelligible to us as to those to whom they were first addressed. But in his mode of speech, St. Paul was in violent contrast to his Lord. A man of quick and receptive mind, he had an extraordinary power of pressing into the service of Christ current terms of Judaism and paganism. Trained in Jewish dialectic, he could argue with Jews with Rabbinic subtlety; a Hellenist, he knew something of the aspirations of the paganism around him, and could utilize its concepts to make less strange and unfamiliar the Gospel that he preached. But because he used so well the language of his own age, it is not easy for us modern men to understand him. And, beautiful as is our English version, it has failed to make St. Paul's genius intelligible, for its placid dignity masks the passion of his words, and turns his often broken Greek into the calm periods of a formal theologian.

St. Paul's letters are to be read, not as considered treatises, but as occasional utterances, dictated to

amanuenses, and apparently dispatched without revision. They are writings such as a missionary has often to send to Churches he is unable at the time to visit. They are substitutes for sermons, and are not concerned to systematize Christian truth, but to relate it to the special needs of those to whom they would be read.

It is impossible, then, to interpret St. Paul's words as if they were the precise statements of a professional theologian, and this to-day is widely recognized. One extreme leads to another, and in recent years the fashion has grown up of speaking of Paul, not as a theologian, but as a 'mystic'. But mysticism is a word which should not be used without explanation. Mystic Paul was, if by mystic we mean one who has himself personal experience of divine realities. But, as often used, the word mystic suggests a connoisseur of spirituality, and so one remote from those who live in the troubled ways of active life. Mystics may be less unpopular than theologians, but, outside some literary coteries, mysticism has a strange and exotic sound. Nor do we gain much if we speak of him as primarily a 'saint'. He was more concerned with the proclamation of the Gospel than he was with his own faultlessness. His was not the carefully fabricated saintliness of some of the great contemplatives. For that he had no leisure, and, it may be, no inclination. He was a 'saint' only in his own sense of the word. Like all other Christians, he was 'separated' from the world, living in communion with God in Jesus Christ, and possessing already in the Spirit something of the powers of the unseen and eternal world. But in this, in his own judgement, he stood in the same relationship to God as the simplest and least conspicuous Christian.

Yet, in one respect, St. Paul felt that he was marked off from other men. God had called him to a special task, and had enabled him, more than others, to work for its fulfilment. That task was not, in the first place, the formulation of a theology, nor the cultivation of his own inner life. It was to be the 'apostle', the 'messenger' of Christ, His servant, and so the servant of the Churches. It is then as the supreme missionary that St. Paul is best understood, and it is as we have this in mind that we can rightly use the other terms by which he has often been described. Thus he was a 'theologian', only in the sense that every missionary has to be, who, with receptive mind, seeks to explore the Christian message that he may relate it to the aspirations of those among whom he works. He was a 'mystic', because as a missionary, free from other duties and ambitions, Christ so filled his thoughts that His service was his sole desire, and His companionship his one constant joy. He was a 'saint', because, more than others, he was devoted to the Lord who had won his eager love, and so impelled him to a life of hard and ceaseless labour.

The message of a missionary of insight cannot be understood without some knowledge of those among whom he works. The teaching which he gives to his converts will be conditioned by the special difficulties created by their pagan antecedents, while in his preaching to non-Christians, he will use terms which express aspirations they already have. Our understanding of much in St. Paul's presentation of Christianity still awaits a further knowledge of his environment, but we have, by now, sufficient data to form some idea of the world in which he worked. As is well known, the most assiduous attempts have

been made in recent years to ascribe St. Paul's conception of Christianity to the influence of contemporary paganism, and especially of the mystery-cults, which, it is claimed, already existed in his time. We shall have later to try to estimate the success of such attempts, but this, at least, they have secured. They have led to the more minute investigation, both of the Judaism and of the Græco-Orientalism of St. Paul's time, and so have enabled us better to understand the world in which he lived. In consequence, it has become clear that St. Paul was a man of the first century, thinking, as did both Jews and pagans of that age, not abstractly, but concretely, so that, for instance, he conceived of the spiritual enemies of man, not as mere abstractions, but as half-personal antagonists, and, among these antagonists, he numbered not only Sin and Flesh, Death and Demons, but even, at times, both Law and Wrath. To us such modes of thought seem strange. In the mission-field there are many who thus conceive of their moral conflict, and, in this way, missionary experience may supplement the labours of scholars, and help us better to understand how St. Paul and his converts thought of Christianity, whilst, at the same time, the work of modern missionaries may illustrate, in part, the work of the greatest missionary of all.

Interpreted as the formal statements of a systematic theologian, St. Paul's Epistles seem obscure and incoherent. Read as writings which were part of his missionary labours, they reveal sufficient of their meaning to enable us to understand the distinctive nature of his missionary message, and to see how he related that message to the various needs of men.

CHAPTER I

THE MISSIONARY AND HIS MESSAGE

I. The Early Life of St. Paul

ST. PAUL'S place in history is due in part to the energy and adaptability with which he proclaimed the Christian message, and to the success with which he made plain its universal scope. His birth and upbringing must have helped him much. But natural advantages do not, in themselves, explain the work of the decisive leaders of our race. Doubtless there were other Jews, in contact with Christianity, who had been born in strict Jewish homes in pagan lands and who were in possession of the Roman franchise. But there was only one St. Paul. We must not then overprize the effect on Paul of the early circumstances of his life, or speak as if we have here a sufficient explanation of his greatness. St. Paul did not become the supreme interpreter of Christ because he had been born at Tarsus. It was the use he made of those advantages, not those advantages themselves, which gave him his influence. Yet we can see from his letters of what inestimable value his birth and upbringing proved in his missionary work.

A modern missionary to an Eastern land has not only to learn laboriously the language of the people to whom he has been sent. He has a still harder task:

to unlearn his Western prejudices, and try, as best he may, to look at life from an Oriental standpoint, that so he may present a Christ who is not of the West alone, but of the East. St. Paul was spared that arduous necessity. When he would boast of his Jewish privileges, he could claim that both he and his parents were 'Hebrews',[1] knowing, that is, something of Aramaic, but from childhood he would have learned to speak in Greek, the common language of Mediterranean civilization. Like other Jews of the Dispersion, he would have learned a Greek which was influenced much by the Hebraisms of the Septuagint, but, although his Greek was not the Greek a non-Jewish Greek would speak,[2] yet it was a Greek he could use with freedom and effectiveness, as the swift and vivid medium of his thoughts and feelings.

St. Paul's letters reveal at least a superficial knowledge of the paganism of his time. We do not know if he gained that knowledge from his youth at Tarsus, or if he won it only after his conversion, when his sense that he had now a religion, which was not the prerogative of the Jews, but a Gospel for the world, would cause him to look at paganism with new interest and insight.

We do not know even the simplest facts of St. Paul's early life. The Book of Acts informs us that after the tumult in the temple which led to his arrest, his sister's son secured his safety by informing the Roman tribune of a plot which had been made to seize Paul and to kill him.[3] The reference is tantalizingly brief, but it seems to show, not only that Paul

[1] Phil. iii. 5.

[2] Cp. E. Meyer, *Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums* III, 1923, p. 313.

[3] Acts xxiii. 16.

had a sister married in Jerusalem, but also that she moved in the most influential Jewish circles there, as otherwise it is unlikely that her son would have heard of this secret conspiracy. As Paul's family was thus in contact with Jerusalem, it is possible, as some scholars suppose, that Paul not only studied in Jerusalem as a young man, but that he came there as a young boy for his schooling. If that be so, it seems useless to examine the paganism of Tarsus, for there would then be no reason to suppose that it had much influence on Paul's early development. Paul's knowledge of pagan ideas and practices must, in that case, have been gained in his missionary years. We are here in the realm of surmise, but the view that Paul received his schooling at Tarsus seems better to fit the facts. His Bible was the Septuagint, and he uses Greek with a facility which seems to show an early study of it.

To what extent Paul was familiar with Greek literature we do not know. The one quotation from it in his letters is a familiar line from Menander's comedy *Thais*.[1] As a Jew, Paul would have shunned the theatre, and it may well be not an accident that he quotes Menander, for he was a writer read in schools for his sententious wisdom.[2] The absence of other quotations in his Epistles is not, in itself, conclusive. They were written, not as works of literature, but as part of his missionary work, and such letters, although they naturally fall back on the authoritative words of the Old Testament, do not lend themselves to literary quotations. Yet we find in them frequent, and apparently unpremeditated, reference to the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 33.
[2] J. Weiss, *Comm. in loc.* p. 367.

commonplaces of popular Stoic philosophy,[1] whilst scholars have detected in some of Paul's less impassioned passages the influence of the Cynic-Stoic diatribe.[2] It seems not unreasonable then to conclude that Paul, in those early years when facility in speech is gained, was not entirely unfamiliar with Greek culture. With great probability it has been surmised that Paul was taught at Tarsus by a Jewish rhetorician, who himself had, at any rate, a superficial knowledge of Greek modes of oratory, and of that Stoic philosophy of which Tarsus had given the world some of its most famous exponents.[3]

If we may thus assume that Paul spent his boyhood in Tarsus, then we may suppose that Paul knew something of its paganism. In knowing the paganism of Tarsus, Paul would have known the paganism of that Mediterranean world which was afterwards to be the scene of his missionary labours. The Roman Peace had brought about a unified civilization, held together, not only by a highly organized government, but by means of communications which made travel simple and safe. As Epictetus wrote: 'There are no wars nor battles any more, no great bands of robbers or pirates; we are able to travel by land at every season, and to sail from sunrise to sunset.'[4] Peace and easy means of communication had helped to secure, not only unity in civilization, but in religion. The

[1] The passages are conveniently given in Lightfoot's Essay, *St. Paul and Seneca*, appended to his *Philippians*.

[2] E.g. P. Wendland, *Die urchristlichen Literaturformen* [2], 1912, p. 356 f.

[3] J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, 1917, p. 134.

[4] *Discourse*, III, 13, 9, quoted by W. R. Halliday as the heading of his interesting chapter on Communications in *The Pagan Background of Early Christianity*, 1925, pp. 64–104.

paganism of the Roman Empire was not the Greek religion, familiar to us from the Greek classics. It was a paganism which, though Greek in form, was largely Oriental in content.

To-day Tarsus is an unimportant town remote from the sea. In Paul's time, it was a great metropolis with an important harbour.[1] It was an Oriental town,[2] with its Orientalism veneered with Greek philosophy and religion.

Chief of the gods was Baal of Tarsus who was identified with Zeus. As activity was held to be beneath the dignity of supreme majesty, with him was associated a young and active god, Sandan, who was generally identified with Heracles.[3] Sandan was the mythic founder of the city. In his honour a periodical festival was held in which a pyre was erected and on this pyre, it is believed, was burnt an image of the god. The rite seems to show that Sandan, like Adonis, Osiris and Attis,[4] was a 'vegetation-god', whose death and reappearing was a dramatic representation of the yearly dying and revival of plant life. Such conceptions were ancient and widespread

[1] On Tarsus, see W. M. Ramsay, *The Cities of St. Paul*, 1907, pp. 85–244. The data for the study of its religion is given at length by H. Böhlig, *Die Geisteskultur von Tarsos im augusteischen Zeitalter mit Berücksichtigung der paulinischen Schriften*, 1913.

[2] Thus women were very strictly veiled. On the importance of this for the understanding of Paul's reference in 1 Cor. xi. 3–16 see later, p. 202 f.

[3] Cp. Acts xiv. 12, where the people of Lystra call Barnabas Zeus and Paul, the 'active' spokesman, Heracles. Sir J. G. Frazer (*The Golden Bough*[3], IV. *Adonis Attis Osiris*, 1914, p. 161) suggests that Baal-Tarz and Sandan were related as father and son.

[4] For the myths connected with these gods see Detached Note B, pp. 266–72.

and, apparently, were at first associated with barbaric rites. Later there was given to them a mystic meaning, and there were mystery-guilds with ceremonies which are often compared with the Christian sacraments. It is believed by some scholars that such mystery-guilds already existed in Tarsus in Paul's youth, but for this there seems as yet no evidence.[1]

Confused and fragmentary as are the data for our knowledge of the paganism of Tarsus, we may well doubt if Paul, as a Jew, would have had even as clear a conception of it as modern scholarship affords. It is difficult for those who have had no experience of the contact of religions to realize how little the adherents of one religion know of the ideas and practices of other faiths. Thus, in India, the ordinary Hindu knows little of Islam except its prophet's name, whilst the Moslem is too contemptuous of Hindu polytheism to care to inquire about it, even although his own faith has been, in part, influenced by its Hindu environment. Although Christianity, as a universal religion, is concerned with the conversion of non-Christians, it is hard to find Indian Christians sufficiently interested in Hinduism and Islam to be able to give any clear account of their rites and aspirations.[2]

[1] Böhlig, who so argues (*op. cit.*, pp. 76–80), can give no clear evidence. On pp. 94–107 he seeks to show that there existed at Tarsus in Paul's time, not only mysteries related to the Eleusinian, but also those of Mithraism. But this, as he admits, is as yet unproved. Paul's use of the contrast of 'truth' and 'falsehood' seems at most to show the influence of Persian religion, not of Mithraism—if, indeed, the use of so obvious an antithesis proves anything at all.

[2] There are, of course, some notable exceptions. Thus in India we have T. I. Tambyah's *The Foregleams of God*, and A. J. Appasamy, *Christianity as Bhakti-Marga*; but both these gifted and sympathetic writers owe much to Western students of religion.

And Paul was a Jew, trained to see in paganism only error.

When, in later days, Paul referred to his early advantages, he spoke, not of the opportunities of systematic observation of paganism which his early life at Tarsus had given him, but of his birth in a strict and orthodox Jewish home, proud of its Jewish heritage, and sharing in the rigorous Judaism of the Pharisees. In such a home, paganism would not be thought of with sympathy. Its practices would be shunned with the aversion which many an Indian Christian feels for the practices of Hinduism. Nor have we any reason to suppose that Paul had ever been a 'liberal' Jew and thus been influenced by men like Philo, who, while retaining their loyalty to Judaism, sought to relate it to Greek philosophy. All that we know of Paul's pre-Christian experience suggests that he was one who shared to the full his people's pride. If he had heard of the expectation which some pagans cherished of one who would redeem the Roman world, he would have turned from it with scorn. His hope lay, not there, but in the coming of the Messiah, who would judge the Gentiles, save the chosen people, and vindicate the authority and splendour of the Jewish Law.

St. Paul's upbringing then was not that of a liberal-minded and tolerant Jew, prepared, when later he knew of Christianity, to find in it a means of bringing into unity Jewish Messianism and pagan ideas learnt at Tarsus of Sandan, a 'redeemer-god'.[1] He was one whose knowledge of paganism was superficial, but whose Judaism was loyal and intense.

[1] As Böhlig suggests, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 and 168.

II. Paul the Jew

That Paul before his conversion was a devoted Jew is clear. But it is not easy to decide what the Judaism was for which he strove. His letters reveal an intimate knowledge of the Old Testament—a knowledge so intimate that he could misquote it, in the way we only misquote books we know so well that we quote them from memory, without looking up our references.[1] But it is impossible to reduce the teaching of the Old Testament to any simple formula, and it is only by the careful examination of St. Paul's writings that we can tell what aspects of it most impressed him. As we thus study his letters, we can see the influence on him of the Jewish methods of exegesis in which he had been trained. Often he is less concerned with the historic sense of the passages he quotes, than with their edifying meaning, and, when the plain sense of the text is insufficient for his purposes, he can interpret it by analogies which were more convincing to his age than they are to ours.[2]

His letters show how large a place the Jewish Law had in his earlier experience, and his later attacks on legalism should not obscure the veneration with which he, like other devout Jews of his time, held the Law which God had given to His chosen people. The Law, with its detailed behests, seems to us to-day an anticlimax to the magnificent intuitions of the great Hebrew prophets. But it has to be remembered that

[1] So in 1 Cor. x. 8 he speaks of 23,000 having perished instead of the 24,000 of Num. xxv. 9.

[2] E.g. 1 Cor. ix. 9, where the prohibition of muzzling an ox when treading out the corn is taken to show that the servants of the Church have a right to maintenance.

the teachings of the great prophets were of individual splendour, whilst the Law, with its enactments, secured an immense advance in average morality. Modern Jewish scholars complain of the harshness with which St. Paul later attacked the legalism of his earlier religion. Such complaints seem just. A convert is rarely able to appreciate the nobler aspects of the religion which he has himself abandoned. Thus, to-day, a man who, at immense cost, has left Hinduism for Christianity, is generally too conscious of the failure of Hinduism to meet his own need to be able to appreciate its higher aspects. Of the worst bitterness of the convert St. Paul shows little trace. Only once does he speak harshly of the Jews, and then under the great provocation of their persecuting zeal.[1] He remained a patriotic Jew, proud of his ancient heritage, seeing in the Law the special privilege of his race, and having, as his heart's desire, that his countrymen should be saved. Yet his judgement of Judaism was inevitably coloured by his experience of it, and we have in his writings, not an account of what it may have meant for those who still found in it satisfaction, but what it had come to mean for one to whom it had brought in the end, not peace, but inner torment.

We may not cite even our Lord's condemnation of the Pharisees as a proof that Judaism was without moral earnestness. All long-established religions tend to formality. Our Lord's denunciation of the Pharisees was less a denunciation of a particular class in Judaism than a denunciation of all professedly religious men, who have become self-complacent, and impervious to new truth. The Book of Psalms was the hymnbook of the Judaism of that time, and we have only to

[1] 1 Thess. ii. 15.

remember the hundred and nineteenth Psalm to realize that there were those who found in the Law, not dull and burdensome enactments, but 'statutes which had become their songs in the house of their pilgrimage', and it may well be, as a modern Jewish scholar claims, that 'to the great bulk of Jews the law was at once a privilege and a pleasure.'[1] We need no further proof of the living piety of Judaism than this: that from the Judaism of that age should have come a man of Paul's moral earnestness and vigour.

Rigid as was the Judaism of Paul's time in its outward observances, there were in it great divergences of thought. The increasing emphasis on God's transcendence had led, possibly under Persian influence, to a great development in the belief in angels and in demons. Contact with Hellenism had led some Jews to a new interest in the significance of paganism. Thus the *Wisdom of Solomon*, which Paul seems to have known, though it denounces scornfully the worship of idols, yet speaks with a certain respect of the pagan worship of the elements of nature, and reveals, both in its teaching on God and on immortality, the influence of ideas derived from Stoic and Platonic thought. This Hellenization of Judaism found full expression in the writings of Philo of Alexandria. Paul may have known his name, and learnt by hearsay of his teaching, but there seems no evidence in the Epistles that Paul had studied the writings of this brilliant, but lonely, thinker.

Of great significance was the revival of the Messianic hope, but that, too, took very different forms, and it is difficult to tell to what extent the books in which it found expression were widely known. In the *Psalms*

[1] C. G. Montefiore, *Hibbert Lectures* of 1892, 1897 edit., p. 503.

of Solomon, a book apparently written in defence of Pharisaism, there is the expectation of a Davidic king who 'shall purge Jerusalem and make it holy even as it was in the days of old'. 'And there shall be no iniquity in his days in their midst for all shall be holy and their king the Lord Messiah'.[1] In the first part of the *Book of Enoch* there are portrayed the splendours of the Good Time coming, but there is no mention of the Messianic King. In the second part, the *Similitudes of Enoch*,[2] the Kingdom's coming is connected with the glorious appearance of the Son of Man, who shall execute God's awful judgements, and become 'the hope of those who are troubled of heart'.[3] From such passages Wrede, with brilliant ingenuity, has constructed a 'Christ-dogmatic' of Judaism, and has sought to show that, while still a Jew, Paul had already a high 'Christology'. His attempt seems to go far beyond the facts. We have no proof that Paul was acquainted with the *Similitudes of Enoch*. Even if he was, he would have found in it a picture of a Son of Man to whom no one could give the devotion which Paul later gave to One who, as he believed, was his living Lord, with whom he had communion.

Great stress has been laid by some scholars on the fact that Paul was a Jew, not of Palestine, but of the Dispersion.[4] It may be doubted if that is of such significance as these maintain. Devout Jews through-

[1] From Ps. xvii. For the phrase 'Lord Messiah' see Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 1917, i, pp. 136–8. Translations from the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha* are from Charles' Oxford Edition.

[2] Found in chapters xxxvii–lxxi. [3] xlviii. 4.

[4] E.g. Böhlig, *op. cit.*, 165 f.

out the world looked to Jerusalem as their mother-city, and the pilgrimages to the Temple helped to secure considerable unity in thought and feeling. In one respect, indeed, the Jews of the Dispersion did differ at this period from their co-religionists in Palestine. They did not share in their aversion to the Roman rule. Roman law secured for these exiles protection and security, and, not unnaturally, they held the Roman Government in some esteem. When, as a Christian, Paul spoke of the 'higher powers' as ordained of God, and urged obedience to the civic power, he was probably continuing the traditions of his youth.[1]

But the recognition of the usefulness of the Roman rule does not seem to have made the Jews of the Dispersion less ardent in their expectation of the time when the Law would be established by God's catastrophic act, and the exiles brought back again to Jerusalem to share in the splendour of God's vindication of His people. There seems no reason to suppose that the Jews of Tarsus were more liberal in their outlook than those of the homeland.[2] It is clear from Paul's own statements that his was not a home of compromise. He was brought up as a strict Jew, and it was as a strict, and not as a liberal Jew, that he opposed Christianity and was eventually converted to it.

It seems useless, then, to attempt to obtain from

[1] Rom. xiii. 1–7; cp. Böhlig, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

[2] C. G. Montefiore, in his eagerness to defend Rabbinic Judaism, even claims that 'Hellenistic and Apocalyptic Judaism, so far as the latter can be safely distinguished as a separate type, strike us, when we read their literary products, as less human and childlike than Rabbinic Judaism, and as more sombre and austere'. *Judaism and St. Paul*, 1914, p. 95.

Jewish sources a knowledge of what Judaism meant to Paul while he was yet a Jew. That knowledge can only be gained from his own scattered references in his Epistles, and from these it is clear that, however it might be for other men, for Paul two aspects of Judaism had been of supreme importance: the endeavour to obey the Law, and the eager expectation of the 'age to come', when this present age with all its miseries would pass away, and God's power be manifested.

III. The Conversion of St. Paul

'St. Paul', as Loisy has well said, 'was not one to analyse himself for the benefit of posterity'.[1] After his conversion, he was far too busy in proclaiming his great discovery to spend time in explaining how he himself became a Christian. St. Paul's conversion has often been compared with that of Luther. For Luther we have now abundant material to enable us to trace the development of his thought up to the time of his final breach with Rome. For Paul such evidence is lacking, and attempts to explain the events which led to his conversion are largely guesswork. To Paul himself, his conversion appeared as something inexplicable by any teaching he had received. It came through the 'revelation of Jesus Christ'. It was God's work. God had chosen to reveal His Son to him that he might be the messenger of the Gospel to the Gentiles.[2]

Even a cursory reading of the Epistles shows the importance to Paul himself of his experience on the Damascus road. At present it is the fashion to

[1] *Les Mystères Païens et le Mystère Chretien*, 1919, p. 303.
[2] Gal. i. 12, 15.

minimize its significance. As we have seen, Wrede argued that Paul, even when a Jew, had already a complete 'Christ-Dogmatic'. He believed in 'a celestial being, in a divine Christ, before he believed in Jesus'. So his conversion affected 'Paul's view of Christ' only 'to this extent that the human life of Jesus, with its culmination in death and resurrection, became a part of the picture' which, as a Jew, he already had of Christ.[1] The proofs which Wrede adduces for the existence of this 'Christ-Dogmatic' are curiously meagre, and his theory, for all the brilliance of its presentation, has not to-day many adherents.

More popular at present is the attempt to explain Paul's conversion as a synthesis of ideas connected with pagan redeemer-gods with ideas derived from the simple Messianism of the early Church. The title Lord (*Kyrios*) which Paul applied to Jesus could not, we are told, have been given to the Messiah. It must have come from the mystery-cults, and Böhlig surmises that Paul derived this conception of a Saviour-Lord from the popular cult at Tarsus of Sandan a 'vegetation-god'.[2] Bousset, with many other scholars, admits that Paul here was not an innovator, and holds that this epoch-making synthesis was the work of converts from Hellenism at Antioch, and supposes that it was to this Hellenized Christianity that St. Paul owed his conversion.[3]

Böhlig's suggestion seems a pure surmise. Bousset's theory suffers from the fact that we know nothing of Gentile Christianity before the conversion of St. Paul. Apart from Romans, all his Epistles are

[1] *Paul*, E.T., 1907, pp. 151, 153.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 56 and 168.
[3] *Kyrios Christos* [2], 1921, pp. 76 ff. See later, pp. 67 f.

addressed to Churches he had founded. He did not get his Christianity from them. They owed to him their knowledge of the Gospel. We know nothing of the supposed transformation of Christianity at Antioch. If, as the primitive Church believed, Jesus was one who had been raised from the dead and exalted 'to God's right hand', a fact so unique and new was sufficient to account for the worship of Jesus, and the ascription to Him of the title 'Lord', for the early Church was giving to Jesus a place which far transcended the place assigned by Judaism to its expected Christ. It is the novelty of the fact which these explanations reject. They are based on the assumption that there can be nothing new in the history of religion, so that belief in the Lordship of Jesus, since it was not prepared for in Judaism, must have sprung from the soil of Hellenism.[1]

The attempt to explain St. Paul's Christianity by the mystery-cults so profoundly affects our whole interpretation of his missionary message that we shall have to return to it again and again.[2] Attractive as is this modern theory, the older view, which sees the antecedent of Paul's conversion in his struggle to keep the Law, seems better to fit the facts. Protestant writers may, at times, have unduly assimilated Paul's conversion to that of Luther. But it seems perverse to state, as Loisy does, that 'the conjecture that Paul, like Luther, had an unquiet soul is entirely gratuitous'. 'Paul gives no evidence at all that he was ill at ease under the Law, that he had anguish of conscience

[1] Cp. Wernle, *Jesus und Paulus*, *Z.T.K.*, 1915, p. 22. Wernle's criticism is resented by Heitmüller who defends Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

[2] See later, pp. 53 f., 67–71 and 171.

before his conversion, and that he found insufficient the salvation which the Pharisaic faith afforded him.'[1] Analogies from the mission-field to-day suggest that so radical and costly a conversion as St. Paul's would be preceded by the sense of the failure of his own religion to give him what he sought.

Paul was not the only Jew to realize the difficulty of earning salvation by obedience to the Law. That the just would enjoy God's favour, all were agreed, but who were the just? If some Jews looked forward gladly to the Judgement-day as the day when Israel would be vindicated and its enemies destroyed, others, with a finer ethical feeling, looked for a judgement upon all the unrighteous or disobedient Jews, as well as on Gentiles. We have only to turn to *4 Ezra* to realize how sombre was the piety of some, how deep their sense of human helplessness. The Law was good and holy, but then who was there that could obey the Law? Thus Salathiel exclaims, 'Blessed are they who come into the world and keep thy commandments'. But 'who is there of those who have come into the world that has not sinned? Or who of the earth-born is there that has not transgressed thy covenant? And now I see that the coming Age shalt bring delight to few, but torment unto many. For the evil heart has grown up in us which has estranged us from God, and

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 324. So Wrede, *op. cit.*, p. 146, similarly complains that 'the soul-strivings of Luther have stood as model for the portrait of Paul'. On this Dr. Gardner well remarks: 'It will to an English reader seem strange that Luther should thus be spoken of as unique; we know the type so well in many religious leaders'. As he adds: 'After the full treatment of the subject of conversion in recent works on religious psychology, we see clearly that neither Paul nor Luther was unique, but that they were extreme instances of a species which is common'. *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*[2], 1913, p. 28.

brought us into destruction; and has made known to us the ways of death, and showed us the paths of perdition, and removed us far from life; and that not a few only, but well nigh all that have been created'. Better is it for 'the beasts of the field' than for us; 'for they have no judgement to look for, neither do they know of any torture, or of any salvation promised to them after death'. 'How does it profit us all that in the present we must live in grief and after death look for punishment? O thou Adam, what hast thou done? For though it was thou that sinned, the fall was not thine alone, but ours also, who are thy descendants. For how does it profit us that the eternal age is promised to us, whereas we have done the works that bring death? And that there is foretold for us an imperishable hope, whereas we so miserably are brought to futility? And that there are reserved habitations of health and safety, whereas we have lived wickedly? And that the glory of the Most High is to defend them who have led a pure life, whereas we have walked in ways most wicked?'[1] Yet the writer of these half-despairing words was a devoted Jew, proud of God's special grace to Israel and sure that God had for Israel a special love.[2]

Such passages are of interest as showing that Paul was not alone in his combination of intense loyalty to Judaism with a gloomy sense of human failure, and of the sternness of God's judgement.

[1] *4 Ezra* (the *2 Esdras* of the R.V. Apocrypha), vii. 45–8, 66, 117–22. *4 Ezra* in its present form is a 'compilation published about the year 120'. But it embodies earlier material. Even if this material be later than Paul's time, the book is of great importance as the product of a tendency in Judaism to which Paul had great affinities. On the date and composition see *Apoc. and Pseud.* ii, pp. 542 ff.

[2] *Op. cit.*, vi. 59; viii. 47.

It is this failure which Paul describes in Romans vii. 7–25. He is not, indeed, primarily concerned in this passage to tell us of his own experience. Yet there is a passion and a poignancy in his words which makes it hard to suppose that he is speaking only in the abstract. More probably, he takes his conflict as typical of that of other men, and naturally interprets the past by its contrast with the present. Deissmann holds that St. Paul is thinking here, in the first place, of an experience of his childhood, when 'the law's "thou shalt" was closely followed by the child's "I will not" and transgression', and suggests that it was 'the terror of the struggle' thus begun, which made him become a Pharisee.[1] But the command to which St. Paul refers—'Thou shalt not covet (or lust)'—is concerned, not with deeds, but feelings, and it seems more likely that it was in manhood, not in childhood, that Paul first realized his inability to obey it. When in Jerusalem, Paul would have heard of Jesus, and learnt something of His teaching, and we may well suppose that it was through some report of His words that he discovered the inwardness of the Law's demands. He could control his deeds, his feelings he could not control.

Other Jews might feel that they had failed, and not be very much concerned. God was merciful. He would not be too severe on human frailty. Paul was not one who could avail himself of that kind of comfort. Like Brand in Ibsen's play, with him it it was 'all or nothing'. If he failed at all, he failed altogether. As the writer of the most Jewish book in the New Testament expresses it, 'Whoever obeys

[1] *Paul*, E.T. [2], 1926, pp. 93–5.

the whole of the Law and only makes a single slip, is guilty of everything'.[1] The Law was indeed 'holy' and 'spiritual'. But then he was a creature of the flesh, in bondage to sin, and the realization of the Law's command only increased his resistance to it. He approved the right, and did the wrong. The bitter cry, 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?' is too despairing to be merely a piece of dialectic. It has in it the bitterness of personal experience. It reflects the misery of his pre-Christian days, when he found that he could not keep the Law on complete obedience to which depended, as he believed, his 'righteousness', his acceptance by God. As Luther clung the more eagerly to the monastic ideal, when he had begun to despair of earning salvation by it, so, as it appears, the very disquiet of his soul drove Paul to a more vigorous defence of the Judaism which, by now, was failing to give him peace.

In a man thus zealous for Judaism, and yet distressed and dissatisfied, the preaching of the early Church naturally aroused deep resentment. That preaching proclaimed that the Messiah had come, and the New Age had dawned, and that this Messiah was One who had been rejected by the Jews, and put to death upon the Cross.[2]

[1] Jas. ii. 10 (M).

[2] Cp. especially Acts ii. 14–36. Although there is still great difference of opinion about the date of Acts and the historicity of its early chapters, there is considerable agreement that the account these chapters give of the early preaching is primitive and pre-Pauline. Thus J. Weiss, who holds that Acts was written late, and that its picture of the early Church is idealized, yet holds that the account of the early preaching is based upon an ancient and trustworthy source. As he points out, the absence from that preaching of so characteristic

It is not surprising that Paul persecuted fiercely men who made such claims as these. Did not Deuteronomy say 'Accursed is he that hangs on a tree?'[1] How, then, could this crucified man be the splendid Messiah of Jewish hope? If what they said was true, then, indeed, legalism was abrogated. Recompense could no longer be regarded as the supreme expression of God's dealing with men, if, as these disciples claimed, the innocent Messiah had died the death which, from the Jewish standpoint, was the proof of the curse of God. And within the Christian fellowship there were soon those who realized, more clearly than St. Peter himself, the decisive breach of Christianity with Judaism.

It is significant that it was the preaching of one who had been a Hellenist Jew that aroused a bitterness of opposition which St. Peter's preaching had not provoked. In one of his letters St. Paul refers to two men who became Christian before he did and who were his 'kinsmen'.[2] It may well have been that among the early converts from the Jews of the Dispersion were thus men from Tarsus connected with Paul as belonging to the same tribe of Jews in his home-city, and possibly also by still closer ties of kinship. With a thoroughness which must have embarrassed the early disciples, St. Stephen developed our Lord's teaching on the spirituality and inwardness of true religion. To his hearers, his words seem

a Pauline doctrine as the pre-existence of Christ, is, in itself, sufficient to stamp it as pre-Pauline. *Urchristentum*, pp. 7 ff.

[1] Cp. Gal. iii. 13, on which see later, pp. 100–4.

[2] Rom. xvi. 7. 'Salute Andronicus and Junias, my "kinsmen" or possibly fellow-countrymen (*τοὺς συγγενεῖς μου*), who like myself have suffered imprisonment for Christ and who were converts before me.'

blasphemy 'against Moses and against God'.[1] The Sanhedrin had no power to inflict a sentence of death, and it is possible that its members hoped to induce the Roman power to have him put to death. But St. Stephen's vigorous indictment of the failure of the Jews to obey the Law in which they boasted aroused his hearers to a fanaticism which broke through all legal scruples. St. Stephen was stoned to death; and it was in connection with his martyrdom that we have the first mention of Paul.[2] He 'was consenting to his death', and Paul becomes the leader of the persecutors. Conversion changes a man's purposes, but not his temperament, and St. Paul reveals himself in his letters as choleric and masterful, overbearing at times in controversy and apt to rush into hasty speech, yet sensitive and diffident, needing much the support of friendship, and liable to deep depression when alone. Such a man could not have persecuted with cold equanimity, and it is not fanciful to suppose that the fierceness with which he persecuted the Christians was due to the turmoil of his own soul. Was Stephen right? Was this crucified Jesus, indeed, the risen Christ? That could not be, and yet—what if that were so? So he sought to crush out, not only the Christian Church, but his own misgivings. His persecuting zeal seems then to have been the outcome of what the

[1] Acts vi. 11.

[2] Loisy's denial that Paul was present at the death of Stephen and his assertion that Paul persecuted only at Damascus, not at Jerusalem, seem quite gratuitous. There is no real contradiction, as he asserts, between the narrative of Acts and Paul's statement in Gal. i. 22, that he was unknown by face to the Churches of Judæa (*op. cit.*, pp. 317 ff.). Even Bousset, who propounded this view in the 1st edition of his *Kyrios Christos*, later admitted that Gal. i. 22 is insufficient evidence for so drastic a criticism. *Kyrios Christos*[2], p. 75.

psychologists call a 'repression'. Converts such as Paul are not made from the blandly tolerant, but from those profoundly eager for their own religion, and able to abandon it only with great reluctance and suffering.

To suppose, as some have done, that, until the moment of his conversion, Paul did not trouble himself about the Jesus whose followers he persecuted, is to make Paul's conversion, not unintelligible only, but inconceivable. More probable is the interpretation of his conversion which the words in Acts suggest, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goads'.[1] These words imply that Paul had had already to resist the conviction that the Christians were right; that the Jesus whom the Jews had crucified was, indeed, the Christ. It is true that his conversion coincided with his vision of the risen Lord. But visions do not spring out of nothing. They receive their form and colour from impressions already in the mind.

The suggestion that Paul's conversion can be explained by an epileptic fit seems scarcely worth discussing. If an epileptic fit can do what Paul's conversion did for him, we might all be glad to be epileptics. The externalities of Paul's conversion are not without parallels, and may be capable of psychological explanation. 'Auditions' and 'photisms' are not uncommon concomitants of the resolution of antagonistic complexes by the personality becoming unified through the victory of the 'complex' which before had been repressed.[2] But the hearing of a voice,

[1] Acts xxvi. 14.

[2] Cp. W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902, pp. 251 ff. Jung, from the standpoint of the New Psychology, explains Paul's blindness as 'psychogenic', and remarks, 'Psychogenic

and the bedazzlement of a light, were not the essential elements in Paul's conversion, and, as Dr. Underwood well remarks, ' "psychological explanations" do not prevent our seeing in conversion what Henry Drummond once called "the contemporary activities of the Holy Ghost" '.[1] The initial truth of Paul's conversion is expressed in his own explanation of it,[2] 'It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in me'. Like the witnesses for the Resurrection, he had felt the presence of the Risen Christ.[3] The test of the reality of a conversion does not lie in the psychic phenomena by which it may be accompanied. It lies in the unification of the personality in faith and hope and love, in 'the expulsive power of a new affection', and, for such a one as Paul, in the coherency and truth of the world-view to which it leads. Paul, as a Jew of the first century, was familiar with the idea that Satan could appear to men as he appeared to Eve, in the disguise of 'an angel of light'.[4] But Paul was certain

blindness is, according to my experience, always due to an unwillingness to see, i.e., to understand and to accept what is incompatible with the conscious attitude. This was obviously the case with Paul. His unwillingness to see corresponds to his fanatical resistance to Christianity' (the whole of the passage—quoted in Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, 1923, pp. 189 f.—is of great interest). A modern parallel to the conversion of St. Paul is that of Sundar Singh. He too saw 'a great light' so that he thought 'the place was on fire'. 'I looked round but could find nothing. Then the thought came to me "Jesus Christ is not dead but living, and it must be He, Himself" '. *The Sadhu*, 1921, by Streeter and Appasamy, pp. 4–7.

[1] *Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian*, 1925, p. 196.

[2] Gal. i. 15 f.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 8.

[4] 2 Cor. xi. 14 and 3. Cp. later, p. 148, for the Jewish belief which Paul here assumes that Satan appeared to Eve as an angel of light, and so seduced her.

that his conversion was not due to diabolic deception. It had opened up to him a new world of spiritual reality in which henceforth he lived. He had made the great venture of faith, and found it true. The crucified was, indeed, the living Christ. That meant the complete transformation of his religion. Henceforth, he was the missionary of a message which was every man's concern.

So long as St. Paul's interpretation of Christianity was regarded as an intricate dogmatic system, it seemed necessary to assume that long years were spent in its elaboration, and the reference in Galatians i. 18 was taken to mean that St. Paul spent the first three years after his conversion in lonely meditation in the wastes of Arabia. Such an assumption seems to be without warrant in the New Testament, and is contrary to what missionary experience would suggest. We think of one to-day whose conversion was as costly as St. Paul's. A Brahman of influential family, he had found in religion from the first the supreme interest of his life. A stranger gave him a New Testament, and he was disturbed by the fascination of the Sermon on the Mount. His attempt to crush out this 'Christ-complex' led him to bitterness and anger. He burnt the book, and, flinging himself into a still more eager quest for what Hinduism had to give, joined a band of Yogis that through *yoga* he might win peace. That peace did not come; and, at last, when he knew there was no other way, he became a Christian. It meant that he was cast out by his family and disinherited, spat on by younger brothers who, till then, had, in Indian fashion, given him the respect the younger give to the elder. Yet that conversion, that definite act of choice, brought him inner peace. His concep-

tions of Christianity naturally enlarged with later experience, but, in its essentials, Christianity was for him at his conversion what he found it to be later, a way of communion with God through the Christ in whom God is truly known. For converts of Paul's type to become a Christian is too hard a change to be made lightly, or without first exploring all that their own religion has to give. Before they take the decisive step, such men have already sought to disprove the truth of Christianity, and, when they take it, they understand, at once, its decisive meaning.[1] It seems gratuitous, then, to suppose that St. Paul had to spend three years in the wilderness of Arabia that he might work out the implicates of his new religion. It is possible that the Arabia referred to in Galatians i. 17 is not the Arabia of modern speech, but the kingdom of Aretas to the east of the Jordan, of which Petra was the chief town. Whether that be so or not, we may be confident that St. Paul did not wait three years before passing on to others his great discovery. As J. Weiss remarks, 'For a personality such as Paul's there could scarcely be anything between passionate hate and glowing love, and the account in Acts which says that he "straightway" (Acts ix. 20) preached in the synagogues of Damascus, even if it be not chronologically correct, has a high historic right; its "straightway" has a pathos which comes direct from the soul of Paul'.[2] How he divided the 'three years' after his

[1] Thus a convert from a high-caste family will eat food with a Christian from a low caste like the Pariahs, which a Christian from one of the higher of the outcastes will often refuse to do. For the high-caste convert Christianity involves so much that he is ready for it to involve all.

[2] *Urchristentum*, p. 145.

conversion between 'Arabia' and Damascus the reference in Galatians i. 17 is too brief to tell us. But wherever he went, he went, we may believe, not chiefly to meditate and study, but to preach the Good News, of which he was now the ambassador.

IV. St. Paul's Conversion and His Missionary Vocation

St. Paul's conversion was at the same time a call to missionary service. God had revealed His Son to him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles.[1] His missionary service was not a career he had chosen; it was part of his obedience to God. God, he felt, had separated him from his mother's womb, to be the missionary to the Gentiles. The personal disciples of Jesus were 'once-born' men, who had passed, without violent break, from allegiance to their Master to faith in their living Lord. Paul was a 'twice-born' man, one who had experienced a conversion so strange and wonderful that he could henceforth believe in the possibility of the conversion of the Gentiles, and realize, as the earlier disciples could not, that Christianity was more than a development of Judaism. It was a new religion, world-wide in its meaning. St. Paul knew himself to be 'an apostle by the will of God'. He was the 'servant', the 'slave', of Jesus Christ and the impulse of his service lay less in a sense of pity for a sad and erring world, than in the obligation of obedience to God's will, and the constraint of the love of the Christ who died upon the Cross.

St. Paul was but one of many missionaries. Not only were there other missionaries in the Christian Church, but, outside Christianity, there were many mis-

[1] Gal. i. 16.

sionaries who sought to meet the widespread interest in religion by proclaiming a religious philosophy or a mystic cult. The task of the Christian missionary was harder far than theirs. These philosophies and cults had grown up on the receptive soil of paganism. They were not intolerant, nor exclusive. Each claimed to be the best; none claimed to be the only way. St. Paul believed himself to be the ambassador of the Son of God, in whom alone could God be truly known, through whom alone could men be fully saved. It was a tremendous claim, and it was made, not for some mythic god, around whose rites art and legend had shed an ancient and romantic charm. It was made on behalf of a man who had recently perished as a common criminal. St. Paul realized himself how scandalous to the 'Jews', and how foolish to the 'Greeks', must seem his message, and felt keenly the contrast between his claim to be God's ambassador and the indignity of his circumstances. But he had no choice but to do his work, and he proclaimed his message, not diffidently, but as one who knew that he spoke with the authority of God. When he was addressing Christian congregations, he speaks of his 'teaching', but in converse with non-Christians he felt himself, not so much the teacher, as the 'herald', the 'apostle'. He had to proclaim a message which God had given him. His message was 'the Word of God', it was the 'good news', the Gospel.[1]

But St. Paul had not only to proclaim a Gospel. His was the care of the Churches he had founded.

[1] Oepke points out that, omitting the Pastoral epistles, the word 'Gospel', *εὐαγγέλιον*, occurs fifty times in Paul's Epistles, whilst its verbal form, *εὐαγγελίζεσθαι*, occurs twenty times (*Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus*, 1920, p. 50).

Their members had been, not Jews alone, but Gentiles. Such needed to be trained in the elements of Christian character, and brought with them into Christianity, not only pagan vices, but pagan ideas of God and human destiny. And St. Paul had to meet their needs and explore the meaning of Christianity from the standpoint of his converts from paganism. We have not then to do with an elaborate 'Paulinism', but with a comparatively simple message, which was expressed in the thought-forms of his age, and in connexion with his converts' needs. It was not St. Paul's aim to construct a system; it was his aim so to present the Christian message that its saving power might be revealed.

That is part of the difficulty of our task. To expound the teaching of some of the great systematic theologians requires little more than practice in précis-writing. If St. Paul had left behind him a 'Paulinism', it would not be much more difficult to summarize his teaching than it is that of a Thomas Aquinas or a Calvin. But of 'Paulinism' St. Paul knew nothing. He had no system. He did not build up a theology, doctrine upon doctrine. For convenience' sake, we shall have to deal with his teaching under various heads; but we need to remember that we are not dealing with separate doctrines, but rather gazing from different angles at what for St. Paul was the one central splendour, the glory of God which had been revealed in the face of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER II

THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN LORD

THE long course of Christological controversy has made it very difficult for us modern men to enter into St. Paul's conception of the crucified and risen Lord. The belief in the plenary inspiration of his words has invested his vivid metaphors with statutory authority, whilst his occasional and impassioned utterances have been transformed into proof-texts for subtle theories which concern problems he had not to face. Once again, we have to remember that St. Paul was not a formal theologian concerned to elaborate a complete Christology. He was first and foremost a great Christian believer, the 'slave' of Jesus Christ, finding in his new Lord the answer to every need of religion, and eager to pass on to others his own glad discoveries. Even when he seems to soar into speculation, and speaks of the mode of Christ's incarnation, His pre-existence, and His cosmic significance, he is writing, not as a philosophical theologian, but as a missionary, seeking to combat every theory which menaced the security of Christian faith, and so to explore the riches of the Gospel as to reveal its perfect adequacy for men's salvation. If we would understand St. Paul's conception of Christ, we need then to try to forget for a while our modern speculations. We do not use his words aright if we go to

them chiefly to find support for our own explanations of Christ's person. We have, instead, to try to discover the significance of Jesus Christ to St. Paul, a significance which he expressed in relation to the religious aspirations of his age, and in terms which belong to a world-view which has passed away.

I. St. Paul's Experience of Christ

For St. Paul the decisive fact of his Christian experience lay here: that God in His mysterious providence had revealed His Son to him.[1] Always he spoke with wondering awe of that vision of Christ which had come to him at the time of his conversion. There is a deep pathos in his words: 'He was seen of me also'. 'Have I not seen the Lord?'[2] That vision brought to him the certainty that the Christians whom he had persecuted were right, and that St. Stephen's dying confidence was justified. The crucified Jesus was, indeed, the risen Lord. For Paul, as for other earnest Jews of his time, his Jewish faith had gathered around the quest for righteousness and the craving for redemption through the dawn of the new Age. And both these aspirations were now fulfilled. A new way of 'righteousness' was revealed in Christ, not of legal obedience, but of filial trust in the God who had given to the world Christ and raised Him from the dead. And his craving for redemption was now met. The 'Age to come' of the Messianic hope had dawned. Already he shared in part in its joy and glory.

In this St. Paul's experience was not distinctive. It was the common experience of the first disciples.

[1] Gal. i. 15 f.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 8 and ix. 1.

The universal belief of the early Church was expressed in what has been described as the first Christian creed, that Christ died for our sins, and has been raised from the dead.[1] By raising Jesus from the dead, God had shown Him to be the Christ, the Messiah, and from the risen Christ had come the gift of the Holy Spirit, whose presence gave to the early Church the sense of sharing already in the power and wonder of the new Age.

Thus to St. Peter the experiences of Pentecost seemed the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy of the marvels of the Last Day, whilst the Ascension of Jesus he saw foretold in the words assigned to David, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand'. 'God had made both Lord and Christ this Jesus' whom the Jews had crucified.[2] Eagerly he bade men repent while yet there was time before the Lord should send again Jesus the 'long-decreed Christ, who must be kept in heaven till the period of the great Restoration'.[3] Only in Jesus Christ was there salvation. There was no other name under heaven, wherein men could be saved.[4] And with this faith there came to those first disciples a joy which not even persecution could destroy. Jesus lived. The Son of Man was at God's right hand ready to save. So Stephen had witnessed —Stephen in whose death Paul had had his share of guilt.

As we have seen, it was St. Stephen, the Hellenist, who seems first to have realized the radical difference between Christianity and Judaism, and St. Stephen's

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3 f.

[2] Acts ii. 14–36. On the pre-Pauline character of Peter's speeches see earlier, p. 37 note.

[3] Acts iii. 20 f. (M). [4] Acts iv. 12.

work St. Paul completed. St. Paul's faith was the faith of the first believers, but this converted Pharisee realized, as they did not, that Christianity was not a more perfect Judaism, but a new and world-wide religion. This man, brought up in a city of Greek culture and Oriental religion, was able, in a way impossible for Jewish peasants, to reveal the amplitude of the Christian Gospel, and to proclaim Christ, not only in the context of Jewish Messianic expectation, but in relation to current paganism with its worship of many Lords, its fear of demons, and its philosophy which sought a unitary principle, which should relate to the Divine the created universe, and the life of men. The Christ he preached was the same Christ as that preached by the other Apostles, and yet it was a greater Christ, for it was a Christ interpreted from the standpoint of new needs, and related to the religious aspirations, not of Judaism only, but of that Græco-Oriental world to whose missionary service he knew himself to be set apart.

But St. Paul's conception of Christ owed its greatness, not only to his receptive mind and his missionary labours, but also to the supreme intensity of his devotion. To this eager and imaginative man there was no middle way between hate and love. As a Jew, he had been the fierce persecutor of those who claimed that the crucified Jesus was the Messiah of Jewish hope. As a Christian, he gave to his exalted Lord a faith in which awe was mingled with the most fervid love, and conceived of the Christ who was already central in the Church's faith with a peculiar vividness and intimacy.

St. Paul's relationship to Christ finds its most characteristic expression in the phrase which apparently he

coined, 'In Christ Jesus', 'In the Lord'. It denotes, as Deissmann says, 'the most intimate conceivable communion between the Christian and the living Christ'.[1] It is 'in the Lord' that St. Paul has his moral freedom and his confidence. It is 'in Him' that St. Paul hopes at the last to be found in Him. This intimate relationship involved more than his own personal salvation. It covered the whole sphere of his activities. It is in the Lord that he 'teaches'; in the Lord that he has 'the seal of his apostleship'. It is in the Lord that he is 'weak'; in Him that he is 'able to do all things'. In Him he 'triumphs', and has his 'joy'. He is a 'prisoner in the Lord', and in Him his bonds 'are manifest to men'. He was in Christ, and Christ was in him. And in a moment of exaltation he could claim 'I live, and yet no longer I; Christ liveth in me'.[2]

It is customary, and indeed almost inevitable, to speak of Paul's 'Christ-mysticism'. But if St. Paul was a mystic, he was a mystic of a new and Christian kind. The mystic way is usually solitary. St. Paul's relationship with Christ was one which he expected all his converts to share. It is in Him that all alike are free from 'condemnation'. In Him we are

[1] *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*, 1892, p. 98. Deissmann shows that of the 196 times the phrase occurs in the New Testament, 164 are in St. Paul's Epistles (or 155, if we omit the Pastorals), and of the remaining, 24 are in the late Johannine Writings. In this book Deissmann interprets all these references in a local and mystical sense. That seems an exaggeration (Cp. J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, p. 380), as Deissmann himself now admits. 'There are, for example, passages where it is used in a really formal sense. And it may reasonably be assumed that the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle itself had also its differing degrees of elevation'. *Paul*[2], p. 141 f.

[2] Gal. ii. 20.

'blessed with every spiritual blessing'. In Him are available 'all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge'. In Him we must 'walk', in Him 'be strong', in Him 'labour'. God 'will fulfil all our needs in Christ Jesus'. In the Lord we 'rejoice'; in the Lord we 'hope'. In Him 'the dead sleep'; in Him will they be 'made alive'. Thus, for St. Paul, this intimate relationship with Christ was meant to be the common possession and the distinctive mark of the Christian Church. The Church consists of those who are 'in Christ'. It is in Him that its members are created, chosen, called and sanctified. It is in Him that they have the certainty of God's 'love' and 'grace', His 'pardon' and His 'peace'.[1]

St. Paul's Christ-mysticism was something new in the history of religion. It has no parallel in Judaism. Even the most exalted conception of the Messiah which the Jewish apocalypses provide, do not go beyond the idea that the Son of Man would be God's vicegerent upon earth. Before his coming, the evil would fear, and the good rejoice, but not even in the most fervid passages is there any suggestion that the Messiah would take in the lives of the faithful a place comparable with that which Christ had in Paul's experience. And although mysticism was one of the ingredients of contemporary paganism, there was a fundamental difference between such pagan mysticism and St. Paul's relationship to Christ. The nearest pagan analogies are to be found in the Hermetic writings. It is probable that no part of that heterogeneous literature of Græco-Egyptian theosophy

[1] For a full list of passages see Deissmann, *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*, pp. 118–24, or Bricka, *Le fondement christologique de la morale paulinienne*, 1923, pp. 41–5.

is earlier than the second century of our era;[1] but neither in this literature, nor in the possibly older magic prayers akin to it, is there any real parallel to St. Paul's conception.[2] The Hermetic writings reflect the pantheism which, for thinking men, is the natural outcome of polytheism. They are concerned, not with a communion with God based on self-surrender, but with a deification won by esoteric knowledge. St. Paul sought, not identity with Christ, but union with Him. His 'mysticism' was not something different from his faith. His Christ-mysticism was his faith in Christ conceived with peculiar intimacy and fervour. 'He loved me and gave Himself for me'. 'You are not your own, you are bought with a price'. It is in such words as these that we may discover the distinctive poignancy and pathos of the 'mysticism' of St. Paul.

We have here an element in St. Paul's mysticism which is alien also from the mystery-cults with which it is often connected. The mystery-cults commemorated gods who did not give themselves for men, but were the victims of their fate. The death and reappearing of these gods were not thought of as historic facts. They were a dramatic presentation of the decay and revival of plant life, and the rites by which this was portrayed were more important to the worshippers

[1] Cp. W. Scott, *Hermetica*, I, 1924, p. 10.

[2] Thus Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, 2nd imp., 1922, p. 20 ff.) and Bousset (*Kyrios Christos* [2], p. 114) quote from a papyrus published by Kenyon, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, 1893, I, p. 116, of which the most significant words are, 'Come to me Lord Hermes, as babes into the wombs of women. . . . I know thee Hermes, and thou knowest me. I am thou and thou art I'. Kenyon himself remarks of this papyrus that it probably dates from 'the fourth or fifth century'.

than the legends which gathered around them. St. Paul's devotion was not to a mythic figure. The Lord in whom he lived was one with the Jesus who had been crucified, whom many of Paul's fellow-believers had known on earth. It is here that we have the decisive difference between Paul's 'Christ-mysticism' and the mysticism of the mystery-cults.

It seems singularly inapt to say that St. Paul's 'picture of Christ is in its essential features independent of the historic person of Jesus' and that to him 'the Incarnation' was only 'an episode'.[1] Much depends, indeed, on what we conceive the historic person of Jesus to have been. Where Bousset claims that 'it can be definitely asserted that what we call the moral and religious personality of Jesus was of no influence nor importance for the piety of Paul',[2] we may, in part, agree if by 'the moral and religious personality of Jesus' we mean that modernized conception of Him of which Bousset's *Jesus* is so brilliant and attractive an expression. St. Paul certainly did not conceive of Jesus as merely the first true believer in God the Father, the supreme religious genius of the race. St. Paul's faith in Christ was something very different from Bousset's hero-worship. But we miss the meaning of his message if we obscure the fact that for him the living Lord he served was not a figment of the imagination; He was one whose character was known in the earthly Jesus, whose 'meekness and gentleness' were known even to the crudest of St. Paul's converts.[3]

[1] Brückner, *Der sterbende und auferstehende Gott-heiland*[2], 1920, p. 35.

[2] *Kyrios Christos*[2], p. 105.

[3] 2 Cor. x. 1. Bousset, *op. cit.*, p. 105, states that where Paul speaks of Christ's humility (Phil. ii. 6 ff.); His love (2 Cor. x. 14 ff.); His

St. Paul's indifference to the words and deeds of Jesus has often been exaggerated, and, for this exaggeration, support is sought from his famous statement, 'Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more'.[1] It seems needless to suppose with Bousset that St. Paul is here speaking as a 'pneumatic', a 'mystic', who was trying to break away from what to him 'were the burdensome connections of history'.[2] The first half of the verse declares, 'Henceforth we know no man after the flesh', and, in this context, the words can most naturally be taken to refer to knowing Christ in a 'carnal' or unspiritual way, whether that way be the way of Jewish Messianic expectation, or the way in which St. Paul thought of Jesus before his conversion, as a man who, having been crucified, could not be blessed of God. Whatever be the meaning of this obscure and passionate verse, we cannot use it to prove that St. Paul was ignorant of the life of Jesus, or indifferent to it.

The argument from silence is always a precarious one. Thus there are few references in Acts to the words and deeds of Jesus. Yet, if common opinion be right, its author was the writer of the third Gospel. Are we to say that he, too, knew or cared nothing about the life of Jesus? And St. Paul's letters are not

sincerity (2 Cor. i. 19), the subject in all these cases is, not the historic Jesus, but the pre-existent Christ. This seems gratuitous. Paul is not inventing the character of Christ. That character is given in the historic Jesus.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16. There is a full list of interpretations in Windisch, *comm. in loc.*, pp. 186–9.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 118. So he concludes that the accusation of Paul's opponents that he preached himself (2 Cor. iv. 5) was not quite unjust.

formal writings. They are missionary letters, written to meet the special needs of converts who already knew something of Jesus. Yet even in these occasional writings, although explicit quotations are naturally few, the influence of the words of Jesus is unmistakable.[1] And more important than the reminiscences in St. Paul's ethical teaching of the teaching of Jesus, is the grateful recognition of His character which pervades his letters. In 'flesh like our flesh', Jesus yet was 'sinless'. He was one of 'tender mercies'. Even He 'pleased not Himself'.[2] When, with impassioned eloquence, St. Paul speaks of love, this man, who by nature was proud and stern, describes it in terms he could only have learnt through meditation on the character of Jesus.[3] And, as we shall see in the next chapter, the transformation of St. Paul's idea of God is inexplicable except through reference to the character of Jesus.

Yet although St. Paul was not indifferent to the words of Jesus, the deepest meaning of Christ for him was summed up in His death and resurrection. It was the Passion and the Crucifixion which drew forth from him his most intense gratitude and adoration.

II. The Cross in St. Paul's Experience

For St. Paul the significance of Christ's death was not such that it can be treated as one doctrine among many. His whole conception of religion and of ethics

[1] A short list of such parallels is given by Peabody. *The Apostle Paul and the Modern World*, 1923, pp. 267 f. Fuller lists will be found in Titius, *Der Paulinismus unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Seligkeit*, 1900, pp. 12–18, and in Bricka, *op. cit.*, pp. 46–57.

[2] Rom. viii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Phil. i. 8; Rom. xv. 3.

[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7.

was determined by his experience of Christ's Cross. The Cross to him was not an isolated fact. It was rather the luminous centre from which there shone forth the light which illumined for him every problem of faith and duty.

It is useless then to look in St. Paul's Epistles for one precise and ordered statement of the 'doctrine' of Christ's death. He pressed into his service the most varied metaphors in order to bring out different aspects of its meaning. Christ was the 'Paschal Lamb' which had been sacrificed for us.[1] His death was 'an offering and a sacrifice well-pleasing unto God'.[2] As such, it took the place of those propitiatory offerings which Jews and Gentiles alike thought necessary to enable men to draw near to God.[3] Through it, our condemnation is removed.[4] We are redeemed, as slaves are ransomed, to enjoy a liberty which frees us from bondage, that so we may be able to serve God in purity.[5] In the crucified Christ, God reconciles us to Himself.[6] In a bold paradox St. Paul speaks of an interchange between Christ and ourselves. He, the sinless, became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.[7]

It was not deliverance from sin alone that St. Paul found in the death of Christ. Like others of his age, he believed that many of the evils from which men suffer were due to the malignant hostility of evil spirits, and from their tyranny Christ's Cross had set men free.[8] There were barriers which divided Jew

[1] 1 Cor. v. 7. (For the significance of this phrase see later, p. 222.)
[2] Eph. v. 1.
[3] Rom. iii. 25.
[4] Rom. viii. 1–4.
[5] 1 Cor. vii. 23 and vi. 20.
[6] 2 Cor. v. 18.
[7] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[8] See later, chap. iv, pp. 162–4.

and Gentile. Christ's Cross had removed them,[1] for, through it, access to God was secured to all, without regard to race or sex.[2] Thus the Cross meant, not only reconciliation between God and man, but between men and men, for it brought into the unity of the Church those who before were separated from each other. So the Cross changed for the Christian every relationship. As Dr Denney said, 'The whole of the Christian life is a response to the love exhibited in the death of the Son of God for men. We cannot point to anything and say, "See, that is Christian, that is good in God's sight", without saying at the same time, "That has been generated in the life of man by the tremendous appeal of the Cross" '.[3]

It will be convenient to defer till the next chapter the consideration of those passages in the Epistles from which a theological interpretation of Christ's death is generally obtained, for they concern, not so much St. Paul's conception of Christ, as his conception of God.[4] Before, St. Paul had thought of God primarily as a judge; now he thought of Him as a father, and discovered through Christ's Cross that the final secret of God's character and rule was not strict recompense, but the holy love Christ's life and death reveal. 'God commendeth his own love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'.[5] It is there that we have the final certainty of the love

[1] Eph. ii. 14. On the meaning of this 'middle wall of partition', see note on p. 186.

[2] Gal. iii. 28. Cp. 1 Cor. xii. 13 and Eph. iii. 6.

[3] *The Death of Christ*, 1902, p. 151.

[4] See pp. 100–4 and 104–8, where the so-called proof texts, Gal. iii. 10–4 and Rom. iii. 21–6, are discussed.

[5] Rom. v. 8.

of God. God gave to the world His Son, and to His Son a Cross. How, then, shall He not give to believers all things?[1] Because of that supreme gift, this much troubled man could be certain that neither life, nor death, nor any demonic power could separate us from the love of God.[2]

The Cross which thus reveals God's holy love is the supreme expression of the love of Christ. 'He loved me and gave Himself for me'.[3] Here there speaks, not the mystic seeking unity with God by a solitary salvation, but the Christian missionary inspired by the love of Christ to spend his life in the costly service of his Lord, for the love of Christ has in it a constraining power.[4]

Christ's death was thus to St. Paul, not merely a fact of the past, but a present reality. He, too, had to die with Christ that he might rise with Him. By this, St. Paul did not mean an emotional participation in a sacred drama, like that enacted in honour of the 'vegetation-gods' of the mystery-cults. The Christ, who had loved him, and given Himself for him, was not, like these gods, the pathetic victim of his fate. He had become obedient unto death, and the effect of His self-dedication was shown, not in the mystic rapture of His devotees, but in their freedom from bondage to sin, and their share in the power of His risen life.[5] Those who believe in Christ are called to clothe themselves with His character,[6] and to reveal in all the relationships of Church and home the love which He revealed in life and death. For himself, St. Paul could feel that his sufferings were the sufferings

[1] Rom. viii. 32.
[2] Rom. viii. 38 f.
[3] Gal. ii. 20.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 14.
[5] Rom. vi. 2–9.
[6] Rom. xiii. 14.

of his Lord; by them he was helping to fill up that which was lacking in the afflictions of Christ, taking his share in the sorrow which must be endured on earth by the Church which is Christ's body.[1]

III. The Consummation of St. Paul's Experience of Christ

Intimate as was his communion with his Lord, St. Paul was very conscious of its imperfection. He had to live his life 'in the flesh', and, although the worst tyranny of the flesh was overcome, its evil impulses still remained. He was 'in Christ', and 'in the Spirit', yet he still felt the 'mind of the flesh' powerful within him, leading to enmity against God.[2] He had to bruise his body to bring it into subjection, lest he, who summoned others to run the heavenly race, should be himself disqualified.[3] It is natural that, for the purposes of edification, the Church should emphasize those passages in St. Paul's writings which express his indomitable confidence. But there is the other side. We cannot read, for instance, his letters to the Corinthians, without realizing the strain and tension of his inner life. It was not easy for this proud and sensitive man to be 'a fool for Christ's sake', and, at times, the comfortable complacency of his immature converts stung him to the bitter sense of his own 'weakness and dishonour', and of the scorn that he received as if he were 'the refuse and offscouring of the world'.[4] It is little wonder that, at times, in his homesickness for Christ, this lonely, harassed man turned from the thought of his present duties to the hope of the future glory, and looked forward eagerly

[1] Col. i. 24.
[2] Rom. viii. 7.
[3] 1 Cor. ix. 27.
[4] 1 Cor. iv. 10–14.

to the time when he would quit the troubles of his earthly life, and be 'at home with the Lord'. When in prison, and awaiting execution, saddened by the opposition, even at such a time, of his Christian enemies, St. Paul, in his weariness and solitude, could wish 'to be with Christ which was better far'. But at once the remembrance of the Church's need checked this desire. His converts needed him, and their need was more important than his desire.[1] Meanwhile, he sustained himself with the hope that, at the last, he would gain the prize of his high calling, when the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, would transform the body of this humiliation, and conform it to the body of His glory.[2]

That consummation of Christ's work for men he anticipated, not with hope only, but with awe. God's grace in Christ was never to St. Paul something ordinary and obvious. It was an amazing mystery, and although St. Paul felt the constraining of Christ's love, yet it was 'the fear of the Lord' and not, as with many modern men, the charm of Jesus, which inspired his preaching.[3] He knew himself to be the ambassador of a tremendous and decisive message, and hope and awe alike combined to urge him on to summon others to share in his own glad communion with his Lord.

IV. The Place of Christ in St. Paul's Missionary Preaching

Of St. Paul's preaching of Christ to those ignorant of Him, we have but scanty records. The writer of Acts does, indeed, give us an account of the address St. Paul delivered to the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia.

[1] Phil. i. 23 f. [2] Phil. iii. 14, 21.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 11.

It would seem that he means us to take this address as a type of St. Paul's preaching to the Jews, and, although like other ancient historians he probably gives us, not the actual words, but a general impression of what he held the address to be, we may take this sermon as representative of St. Paul's preaching to the Jews. It is significant how little in it is distinctively Pauline. If we can trust this record, we have to suppose that in his preaching to Jews, still ignorant of Christianity, St. Paul preached, much as St. Peter and St. Stephen did in the first beginnings of the Christian Church. A brief sketch of Jewish history serves to remind his hearers of the Messianic hope. That hope had been fulfilled. 'To us is the word of salvation set forth'. Unjustly had the Jewish leaders secured the death of Jesus. Their sentence God had disannulled by raising Jesus from the dead. That was 'the good news' which St. Paul, like other Christians, had to preach. The resurrection of Jesus was a fulfilment of Jewish prophecy. It was the confirmation of the 'remission of sins' proclaimed in Jesus Christ, and of that new way of salvation, through faith in Jesus, whereby a 'justification' was bestowed which the law of Moses had been unable to secure. The address ends with words of solemn warning. Let his hearers beware how they despise God's fulfilment in Christ of His ancient promises to His people.[1]

Such preaching, for all its simplicity, must have been as difficult as it was often disappointing. When, in the most elaborate of his Epistles, St. Paul formulates his proof of human failure to fulfil God's will, in the section devoted to Judaism, it is Jewish pride that he seeks chiefly to combat.[2] To Jews of the Dispersion,

[1] Acts xiii. 16–41. [2] Rom. ii.

contemptuous of the paganism around them, and proud of the purity of their own religion, St. Paul's message must have been too opposed to national patriotism and pride to be acceptable. As St. Paul himself had realized, the acceptance of the Christian Gospel would mean for them a complete transformation of their conception, not only of the nature of the Messiah, but of the character of God.[1] The very 'meekness and gentleness' of Christ would repel more than attract, for popular expectation of the Messiah looked for one who would be strong and glorious, whether he was thought of as a king of the Davidic line, or as the Son of Man, appearing in sudden splendour from the clouds to execute God's vengeance. So the preaching of Christ crucified was to Jews a 'scandal', a stumbling-block, and it was hard for them to discover in it, instead, 'the power of God'.[2]

The records of St. Paul's preaching of Christ to pagan hearers are also of tantalizing brevity. St. Paul's speech at Athens differs from the address to the Jews we have been studying in that it cannot be intended as a typical sermon.[3] It was a special address, owing its form to its special audience. It deals rather with the nature of God than with the person of Christ, for the speaker was interrupted as soon as he began to speak of Jesus and His resurrection. To modern missionaries, the success of this speech seems more striking than its failure. But St. Paul had formed such high hopes of his success at this metropolis of culture, that he felt keenly his partial

[1] See next chapter, pp. 94–109. [2] 1 Cor. i. 23 f.

[3] Acts xvii. 22–31. For an account of this speech see next chapter, pp. 113 ff.

failure, and came to Corinth, determined in his disappointment to preach only Christ and Him crucified.[1] That can scarcely mean, as some have supposed, that St. Paul preached Christ's death alone. A pagan audience could not, at first, have understood the unique and sacred significance of the Cross. In itself, the word 'cross' had no nobler meaning in it than the word 'gallows' has for us. It denoted merely a common and degrading punishment, inflicted upon non-Roman criminals. The significance of the Cross to Christians lies in Him who hung upon it, and St. Paul's preaching must have been a preaching of Christ's life as well as of His death. In turning aside from speculation, and in preaching Christ and Christ crucified, St. Paul was doing what many a missionary to-day finds best to do. Thus, in India it is easy to secure a hearing from high-caste Hindus so long as a man speaks in terms of the philosophy of religion. But a missionary soon learns that interest in the discussion of religion is no proof of moral earnestness. It may be even a substitute for it. The most effective message is simply that of Christ and the significance of His life and death to men. Religious discussion often conceals men's need for forgiveness and renewal. The preaching of Christ may reveal that need, and answer it.

The preaching of Christ crucified is, at first, to a pagan audience doubly offensive. In the ordinary affairs of life, men like to feel that they are the clients of a powerful patron, and in religion they desire that their god should be of conspicuous strength and splendour. And Christianity speaks of One who

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2, cp. Gal. iii. 1, 'Jesus Christ was placarded before your eyes as crucified'.

apparently could not save Himself from a cruel and shameful death. Mystery-cults may have existed in St. Paul's time, but their existence did not make the preaching of the Cross seem other than foolishness. It was one thing to re-enact in dramatic form the myth of some fair Adonis. It was another thing to confess as Lord an actual man who, a few years before, had hung as a criminal upon the Cross. Around the myth, imagination could shed its glamour and its romance. But to call the crucified Jesus 'Lord', meant to share in the shame of His death, and to confess a faith in One whose death seemed a disproof of His power. It is not surprising that the preaching of the crucified aroused the ribald mockery of clever folk.[1]

The 'foolishness' of St. Paul's proclamation lay, not only in its message of the Cross, but in its inevitable exclusiveness. Polytheism is generally tolerant. What matters one god more? The devotees of a particular god are, for the most part, content to claim that he is the most effective deliverer; they are not concerned to say that he is the sole saviour. But not only had St. Paul to preach a Lord who had lived on earth in poverty, and had died upon the cross. He claimed that this Lord had the right to an exclusive homage. A man might be initiated into more than one mystery-cult. If another god could help, why not accept his aid? But for the Christian there were no longer many gods and many lords. There was one God, the Father and one Lord, Jesus Christ. It

[1] Cp. the gross caricature of Christianity found in the Palatine at Rome, which depicts a slave bowing down before a crucified figure with an ass's head and underneath are written these mocking words, 'Alexamenos worships his god'.

is not strange that such a message aroused the bitter hostility of many in that pagan world.

V. The Place of Christ in St. Paul's Instruction of His Converts

If we have but scanty data for St. Paul's preaching of Christ to Jews and pagans, his letters give us abundant evidence for the place which Christ had in his instruction of his converts. But, throughout, he writes, not as a formal theologian engaged in the construction of a coherent and final 'Christology', but as a missionary seeking to lead his people to a realization of the majesty of their Lord, that they might prove themselves His brave and faithful followers, and themselves lead lives worthy of the Lord they served. Theology, in a sense, there is, if, by theology, we mean the refusal to stop short at the immediate utterances of feeling, and the attempt to work out the implicates of Christian faith in relation to the intellectual issues of the age. But St. Paul's theology was itself part of his missionary work. Even when his speculations seem to go far beyond the immediate needs of the Christian life, closer scrutiny reveals that they are intimately connected with the pressing problems of his converts, who, in their ignorance and instability, were in peril of adopting views of Christ which obscured His radical significance. St. Paul's 'Christology', then, is not the 'Christology' of a leisured theologian. It consists of the vivid and occasional utterances of one who was seeking to make Christ intelligible by presenting Him in terms derived from the religious aspirations of those who, for the time, he was seeking to help. As we turn to the examination of these terms, we have to remember that they are of

subordinate importance. They are not to be studied as if they belonged to the technical terminology of a final Christology, but as illustrations of the place and function which St. Paul assigned to Christ.

Of the titles which St. Paul applies to Jesus none is so significant as the term Lord (*Κύριος*).

St. Paul's use of the term Lord brings us, at once, to the modern theory which ascribes his full faith in Christ to the influence of mystery-cults, which used this title for their 'Redeemer-gods'. Bousset, whose great book *Kyrios Christos* is the fullest expression of this view, admits that St. Paul was not here an innovator. The decisive change was made at Antioch by converts from paganism, who interpreted the Christian preaching as that of a new cult-God, Christ, and thus transformed the primitive Messianism of the first believers into the cult of Jesus, a 'Redeemer-god'.[1] It was to this Hellenized Christianity, we are told, that Paul was converted, and thus the classic Christian faith in Christ is explained away as the misconception of men whose minds were filled with pagan ideas.

This certainly is not what is suggested by our records. As we have seen, Jesus is called Lord in the speeches of St. Peter recorded in the early chapters of Acts. Thus at Pentecost St. Peter declared that 'God hath made both Lord and Christ this Jesus whom

[1] *Kyrios Christos*[2], pp. 75 ff., 89 ff. (Cp. Lake, *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*[3], 1919, pp. 44 f.; W. Morgan, *The Religion and Theology of Paul*, 1917, p. 47.) It is unfortunate that Bousset's book is not translated. Its views on this problem are fully described and criticized in Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, 1921, pp. 293–317, and in Rawlinson, *The New Testament Doctrine of the Christ*, 1926, pp. 109–65 and 231–7.

you crucified'.[1] In this St. Peter saw the fulfilment of the prophecy in Psalm cx., 'The Lord hath said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand'. St. Mark's Gospel tells us that this passage had been quoted by Jesus shortly before His crucifixion.[2] Now that He had risen from the dead, the disciples realized the full significance of these words and their faith in His Resurrection and Ascension found here its Scriptural expression and confirmation. For this ascription to Jesus of Lordship by the Palestinian Christians St. Paul himself provides one piece of evidence which no critical violence can eliminate or explain away. In 1 Corinthians xvi. 22 he uses the Aramaic phrase *Maranatha*,[3] a phrase which was used at the Communion Service,[4] and which was evidently a watch-

[1] Acts ii. 36. For the primitive character of these speeches, see earlier p. 37.

[2] Mark xii. 35 f. Bousset, while admitting that Luke may have used ancient sources, seeks to eliminate the evidence of Acts ii. 36 by asserting that it represents Luke's revision (*op. cit.*[2], p. 80 f.).

[3] The phrase may mean either 'Our Lord is coming' (cp. Phil. iv. 3, 'The Lord is near') or 'May our Lord come' (cp. Rev. xxii. 20, 'Come, Lord Jesus'). In the 1st edit. of his *Kyrios Christos*, 1913, p. 103, Bousset took the phrase as equivalent to the 'Come, Lord Jesus' of Rev. xxii. 20, but claimed that it need not have arisen within the Palestinian Church. Instead, he suggested that, although the Church at Antioch was essentially Gentile in origin, yet there were Jews there who may have turned the Greek Kyrios (Lord) into Aramaic. In his *Jesus der Herr*, 1916, p. 22 f., he suggested that the phrase was a curse which had nothing to do with the Jesus-cult, but meant 'Our Lord (i.e. *God*) will come and judge you'. In the 2nd edit. of his *Kyrios Christos* (1921, p. 84) he abandons this explanation, and returns to his earlier suggestion. The phrase 'may have arisen in the bilingual sphere of Hellenistic communities at Antioch, Damascus or Tarsus itself'.

[4] It is used in a prayer, probably of Palestinian origin, in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, x. 5.

word of early Christianity, and, as such, familiar even to Greek-speaking converts. This phrase alone is sufficient to prove that it was not Gentile Christians only who called Jesus Lord. St. Paul's attitude to the Law caused some of the Jewish Christians to become his bitter enemies, but nowhere does he speak as if any of them complained of his estimate of Jesus. There the early Church was one. Christians everywhere were those who 'called upon the name of the Lord'.

Behind this theory there lies, as Feine says, 'the conviction which, though unexpressed, is yet regarded as a dogma, that it is impossible that the earthly Jesus could actually have had more than human greatness'.[1] It is this dogma which makes inexplicable the early Christian faith in Christ as Lord, and so compels its advocates to ascribe that faith to alien influences. But that dogma was not shared by the first believers. The Jesus whom they proclaimed as Lord was the Jesus whom some of them had known and loved in His earthly life, and in whom they had learnt to see, however dimly, the Messiah. Some of the writers of this school seem to forget that for those who preached Christianity at the first, Christianity did not mean that an unknown person had risen from the dead. It meant that the Jesus whom they had already partly trusted had revealed Himself to them as risen, and thus confirmed the best that they had dared to hope of Him. The account in Acts thus seems more credible than the modern theory. They believed that God had made Jesus 'both Lord and Christ', because they believed that God had raised Him from the dead.

[1] *Der Apostel Paulus*, 1927, p. 604.

It is fashionable to-day, because of the ascription to Jesus of Lordship, to speak of the 'Christ-cult' of the early Church, and to derive from this St. Paul's statements about Christ's dignity and place. The phrase contains an obvious element of truth. Christ as Lord was the object of faith; all Christians 'called upon Him'; in His name they were baptized; at His table they believed Him to be present. Yet the phrase does not seem a happy one. It has too pagan a sound rightly to fit the facts. In the mystery-cults, as in the *bhakti* movements of modern Hinduism, the worshipper was interested only in his special 'Lord'. He was not interested to relate his cult 'Lord' to the supreme God. Doubtless many converts from paganism, like such converts to-day, were content to put Christ in the place of the god or gods whom they had worshipped, and thought little of the transformation of the idea of God which His revelation in Christ has brought. But the first believers, and St. Paul himself, were not converts from paganism, but Jews. And the Christian message which they preached was not primarily that of a new cult, having Christ as its 'Lord', or 'Redeemer-god', but of God's act in raising Jesus up, and thus putting His seal on the whole meaning of His life and death.

St. Paul's more speculative statements presuppose the worship of Christ as Lord in the Christian community. But Christianity did not begin as a 'Christ-cult'. It began with an experience of Christ as the risen Lord which compelled the first believers to give to Christ the value of God, to think of Him as One divine. The religious valuation of Jesus as Lord was not the product of a Christ-cult, but its presupposition. He was not the Church's Lord, because He was

worshipped as a 'Redeemer-god' or a 'cult-hero', but because in Him God was revealed and God's saving activity experienced.[1]

But although Jesus was already Lord for the first Jewish Christians, the title 'Lord' gained in the pagan world a new significance. There were other 'Lords'. The Emperor was called 'Lord', and thus deified, and there were the pagan gods whom men called Lords. If the mystery-cults already existed in St. Paul's time and place, then the title 'Lord' had special importance, for it denoted the relation of the saviour-god to his worshipper. 'Jesus is Lord' became the distinctive expression of Christian faith.[2] But when St. Paul and his converts called Jesus 'Lord', they meant more than pagans did when they so described their god. In the pagan world, there were gods many, and lords many, but, for Christians, there was but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.[3] And St. Paul delighted to describe himself by a term which pagans used of themselves to express their devotion to their god. He was the slave (*δοῦλος*) of the Lord. But, though St. Paul thus described himself by a pagan term, his relation to his Lord was not one of rapt emotion merely, it was a relation of humble and reverential trust. The preaching of the Lord was charged with great solemnity. It was, at the same time, a preaching of the Kingdom—that best possession, which Christians

[1] Cp. especially Althaus, *Unser Herr Jesus*, *N.K.Z.*, 1915, pp. 439–57, 513–45, and Wobbermin, *Wesen und Wahrheit des Christentums*, 1926, pp. 58–99.

[2] Cp. 1 Cor. xii. 3, where the confession 'Jesus is Lord' is declared to be the authentic sign that one speaking with a tongue speaks with the Holy Spirit. On this verse see later p. 211.

[3] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

had already in part, and one day would fully share.[1] And St. Paul had, for his supreme endeavour, the task of bringing all the Gentiles into an obedience, not of blind submission, but of faith.[2]

In view of the prevalence in the pagan world of the idea of saviour-gods, it is somewhat surprising that St. Paul so rarely refers to Jesus as Saviour (*Σωτήρ*). It was a conception readily intelligible both to Jews and Gentiles. According to Acts, St. Peter employed the word as a description of Jesus,[3] and St. Paul used it in an address at Pisidian Antioch to a Jewish audience.[4] The term is used both of God and Christ in various places in the Pastoral Epistles, but, in the Epistles which we can with more certainty ascribe to St. Paul, it is found only in Philippians iii. 20 and Ephesians v. 23. It is hard to say if the omission of this title in the earlier Epistles is only accidental.[5] One brought up in Tarsus must have known that pagans spoke much of 'Saviours', and it is possible that St. Paul refrained from using the word 'Saviour' as a normal title for Jesus, because he felt that the word was too intimately connected with pagan ideas to be wisely used as a name for Jesus.

To the Gentile environment of his work may be due the rarity in St. Paul's writings of the descriptions of Jesus which connected Him with Jewish hope. The term 'Christ' in his Epistles is used, for the most

[1] As a present possession, Rom. xiv. 17; 1 Cor. iv. 20; Col. i. 13, and iv. 11. As a future inheritance, 1 Cor. vi. 9 ff., xv. 50; Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5; 1 Thess. ii. 12. (Cp. Oepke, *op. cit.*, p. 148.)

[2] Rom. i. 5; xv. 18; xvi. 26.

[3] Acts v. 31. [4] Acts xiii. 23.

[5] Thus in 1 Thess. i. 10 the idea, though not the word, is found ('who shall rescue us from the wrath to come').

part, not as a conscious translation of 'Messiah', but as a proper name, part of the ordinary designation of Jesus. In the great doxology in Ephesians, St. Paul describes Jesus by the Messianic title, 'The Beloved',[1] but, as in the parallel passage in Colossians St. Paul speaks, instead, of 'the Son of His love', it is doubtful if he has specially in mind the Messianic meaning of the term.[2] And in St. Paul's frequent use of the term 'Son of God', the Jewish origin of the title is not prominent. Christ was the 'Son', and God was the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'.

In at least one instance, Romans i. 4, the phrase 'Son of God' seems to have a distinct reference to Jewish prophecy, and the passage in which it occurs demands attention, as it contains what was for St. Paul an unusually full and precise description of Christ's person.

The Church at Rome was a Church which St. Paul had neither founded nor visited. In it were many converts from Judaism, and he was anxious at once to win their confidence, and to save them from the perils of a Christianity imperfectly emancipated from Judaism. It was natural then that, at the very beginning of his letter, he should relate the Gospel which he preached to the aspirations of Judaism. That Gospel concerned God's Son, and had been foretold by Jewish prophets. In His earthly life, Jesus 'according to the flesh' was of 'the seed of David', and thus fulfilled one of the popular expectations of the Messiah. His spirit was a 'holy spirit', and by the resurrection from the dead He was, by virtue of His 'holy spirit', 'defined' as Son of God. Such seems to be the meaning of this

[1] Eph. i. 6. [2] Col. i. 13.

obscure passage. The word we have translated 'defined' (*ὁρισθέντος*) has been much discussed. It may mean 'designated' or 'installed'. Whatever be its precise significance, it seems clear that we have not in this passage an 'Adoptionist Christology'. Christ did not begin to be the 'Son', on His adoption by God at the Resurrection. The Resurrection did not make Him the Son of God; it served powerfully to reveal what He already was, and, in other passages of this Epistle, the pre-existence of the Son is clearly taught.[1]

In the same Epistle, St. Paul illustrates the place of Christ by a reference to Adam. The effect of Adam's fall was manifest. Through him, Sin and Death, those grim and powerful tyrants, had first obtained their dominion over men. Now a new age had dawned. Christ's obedience, like Adam's disobedience, affected the whole race. Yet there was a difference. The blessed consequences of God's grace in Christ were greater far than the evil consequences of Adam's act. 'If sin abounded, grace abounded more exceedingly'.[2] The passage throws little light on St. Paul's conception of Christ's person. It is rather a pæan of praise for God's gift of Christ, a gift whose far-reaching effect is illustrated by contrast with the effect of Adam's sin.

A similar idea seems to be expressed in a famous passage in 1 Corinthians xv. which has been much discussed in recent years. 'By man came death; by man

[1] E.g. in Rom. viii. 3 ('God sending forth His Son'). Cp. Rom. viii. 32 ('He that grudged not His own Son, but gave Him for us all').

[2] Rom. v. 14–21. On the bearing of this passage on St. Paul's doctrine of sin and the fall, see later p. 144.

came also the resurrection of the dead. In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive'.[1] So Christ is spoken of as 'the last Adam'. The first man Adam became a living soul (ψυχή); the last Adam a life-giving spirit (πνεῦμα). Thus death entered through Adam, and life through Christ. The first man was of the earth, earthy and material. The second is from heaven. Adam and Christ thus mark for Paul the turning-points of human history. Adam was the founder and head of a race, whose members bear the impress of his frailty; Christ was the founder and head of a new humanity, whose members, through union with Him, are destined to bear the image of the heavenly, as on earth they have borne the image of the earthy. As descendants of Adam, we share in his mortality; as belonging to Christ, we are destined to share in the glory of His risen life.[2]

If this interpretation be right, then this passage also tells us little of St. Paul's conception of Christ's person. Like the passage in Romans we have been studying, it is concerned primarily with the effect of His human life and resurrection into glory. It is unnecessary, therefore, to suppose that we have in this conception of Christ as the second Adam the origin of St. Paul's belief in Christ's pre-existence, whether we explain that origin by Philonic speculations, apocalyptic phantasies, or pagan myths of a primeval man.[3] It is not the pre-existence of a 'heavenly man' that St. Paul is here discussing. It

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 20–2.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 45–9.

[3] For a summary of the modern attempts to find in this passage the clue to St. Paul's belief in the pre-existence of Christ, see Detached Note A.

is the extent and nature of the work of the crucified and risen Christ.

Elsewhere in St. Paul's Epistles, Christ's pre-existence is clearly taught. It is implied, as we have seen, in Romans viii. 3 and 32.[1] It finds explicit utterance in 1 Corinthians x. 4, where St. Paul declares that Christ was the rock from which the Israelites in their wanderings drank.[2] It receives its most poignant expression in the famous passage in the second chapter of Philippians, whilst in Colossians it is taught with emphasis and detail as the Christian answer to theosophic speculations on the function of angels in the creation of the world.

Few passages in St. Paul's writings have been examined with such microscopic care as Philippians ii. 5–11. As we read some of the discussions of this passage it is hard to avoid the feeling that their authors have been less concerned to discover what St. Paul meant, than to prove, or disprove, that modern interpretation of Christ's person which claims to be a development of the reference in this passage to the self-emptying, the *Kenosis*, of Christ.[3] But St. Paul is not writing with technical precision, nor in the interests of a recondite theory. He is not here explaining the mode of the Incarnation. He is using its

[1] See the note on p. 74.

[2] St. Paul seems here to be utilizing the Rabbinic legend that the smitten rock from which the water flowed accompanied the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness.

[3] For an elaborate discussion of the passage from the Kenotic standpoint, see Bensow, *Die Lehre von der Kenose*, 1903, pp. 174–229, and from the anti-Kenotic standpoint by Gifford, *The Incarnation, a Study of Philippians ii. 5–11*[2]. In the discussion of this passage the writer has borrowed a few sentences from his book, *The Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, 1925, pp. 42 ff.

fact as the supreme incentive to humble Christian love.[1]

The question has been much discussed: Who is the subject of this self-emptying? Is it the preincarnate or the incarnate Christ? If the question has to be answered, it would seem truer to say the preincarnate Christ, for St. Paul is here emphasizing that the Incarnation was a voluntary act. Yet the antithesis is probably alien from Paul's thought. He was not concerned to divide Christ's career. For him, the Man who had lived on earth was continuous with the Lord in heaven, and His self-abnegation was shown, not only in His readiness to become man, but through all His earthly life. Again, what is the meaning of that much debated phrase 'the form of God'? Form (*μορφή*) was a familiar term of Greek philosophy. But it seems gratuitous to suppose that St. Paul is here using it with the precision of a writer of the best Greek period. Probably he uses the word in its popular sense, so that the phrase in which it occurs denotes merely this: 'who was by nature God'. And St. Paul, unlike some modern exponents of the Kenotic theory, does not attempt to define the mode of Christ's self-emptying. Any such attempt probably goes far beyond the range not of his thought only, but of his interest. It was enough for him to know that the humility Christ showed on earth belonged to His essential nature. Christ did not count His equality with God as something to be grasped at. Instead, He emptied Himself, and took the nature of

[1] So in 2 Cor. viii. 9, the nearest parallel to this passage, the great words 'though he was rich, yet he became poor', are used, not in the interests of theological completeness, but in order that there might be a generous response to St. Paul's appeal for the Christians at Jerusalem.

a man. And His humility and His obedience found their consummation in the Cross. But that was not the end of all. God raised Him up, and gave Him the name which is above every name, so that to His name every knee should bow, and not men alone, but all spiritual beings everywhere, confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Thus His exaltation was no impingement on the majesty of God. It was 'for the glory of God the Father'.

Thus the passage is of prime importance, not for Christology, but for Christian Ethics. We have here a glorying in Christ's Cross which shows how completely St. Paul had rid himself of any shame in its offence. A crucified carpenter was a strange rival to pagan gods. Yet St. Paul had learnt to find in the very scandal of the Cross the supreme incentive to that love which all believing men are meant to show. He, who was by nature God, for our sakes, and for the glory of the Father, appeared on earth, not in the gaudy splendour of a pagan theophany, but in the form of a servant, and became obedient even to the shameful death of the Cross. It seemed a tale of weakness and of folly, and yet the Cross was the wisdom and the power of God. By His self-abnegation, Christ became the actual Lord of men.[1] We have here the mystery of the Incarnation, and of Christ's Cross and Resurrection, expressed in the vivid picture-words of religion. It is useless to try to get from these words answers to problems which belong, not to St. Paul's age, but to the later development of Christian thought.

In every passage we have so far considered, St.

[1] Cp. John xii. 32, 'I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself'.

Paul's references to Christ have been in intimate connexion with the practical needs of the Christian life. In the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul speaks of the cosmic functions of the pre-existent Christ. Such speculations seem so alien from all that we know of St. Paul's character and genius, that it is not surprising that, in the past, many scholars have refused to believe that St. Paul could have written this Epistle. But the same teaching is given, though in undeveloped form, in a passage in one of his indubitable epistles,[1] and, as we shall see, the issue raised was not for St. Paul of merely speculative interest. It immediately concerned the Christian certainty that in Christ, and Christ alone, was there fullness of salvation.

The reference in 1 Corinthians—'There is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him'—occurs in a passage in which St. Paul is answering the inquiry made by the Corinthian Church as to the legitimacy of eating food which had been offered to idols. For himself, and for the more enlightened of his converts, idols were nothing; in consequence, food which had been offered to them could be eaten with impunity. But some of the Corinthian Christians, like many immature converts from paganism to-day, although they knew that Christ was the sole Lord of the Christian Church, yet believed that idols had power, so that to partake of food offered to them was to risk coming again under their domination. St. Paul reasserts the absoluteness of the Christian faith. Christ was not merely the Lord of the Christian Church. For paganism, there were many gods and lords, but for Christianity, there was but one God, the Father, from whom all comes and

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

for whom all exist—the sole source of all existence and its goal. And there was but one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom all exists, and by whom we exist—God's sole agent in creation and in providence.

It is this teaching which St. Paul elaborates in Colossians. The precise nature of the false teaching at Colossae is still obscure. It would appear that it came from Jewish Christians, who, though they held Jesus in high honour, yet gave to angel-worship a place in their religion which menaced His unique supremacy.[1] The growing emphasis in Judaism on God's transcendence had led to the belief in intermediary beings, who served to bridge the gulf between the supreme God and the created world. We have an illustration of this in Proverbs viii. where to Wisdom is assigned a share in the creation of the world.[2] Stoicism, faced with a like problem, spoke of the Word, the *Logos*, as the effective agent of God, and Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, probably under Stoic influences, had dwelt much on the *Logos* as God's instrument in creation. It would seem that the false teaching which this Epistle attacks, influenced by such views as these, had combined with a Judaizing Christianity, a *gnosis* of a dualistic and ascetic kind, which gave an undue prominence to the work of intermediary beings.

Against all such views, St. Paul asserts the sole Lordship of Christ. 'In him we enjoy our redemption, that is, the forgiveness of sins. He is the likeness[3] of the unseen God, born first before all the creation—

[1] Col. ii. 18.

[2] So especially viii. 22–30. Cp. *Wisdom of Solomon*, vii. 22, where Wisdom is described as 'the artificer of all things'.

[3] Image (*εἰκών*).

for it was by him that all things were created both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, including Thrones, angelic Lords, celestial Powers and Rulers; all things have been created by him and for him; he is prior to all, and all coheres in him'.[1]

In Romans viii. 38 f., St. Paul had declared that no spiritual powers could separate us from the love of God in Christ. Here he explains Christ's supremacy over these powers by asserting that He was the agent of God in creation, not of things seen alone, but of things unseen. But, at once, St. Paul returns to the relation of the risen Christ to believing men. 'He is the head of the Body, that is, of the church, in virtue of his primacy as the first to be born from the dead—that gives him pre-eminence over all. For it was in him that the divine fullness[2] willed to settle without limit, and by him it willed to reconcile in his own person all on earth and in heaven alike, in a peace made by the blood of his cross'.[3]

We have here then, not the utterance of a speculative recluse, but the bold claim of a missionary, eager to relate to Christ a theosophy, which, if left unchristianized, might imperil his converts' faith. Whatever spiritual powers there be, in creation as in redemption, there is but one Mediator, Jesus Christ, the Church's Lord. Thus the passage is, throughout, related to practical needs, and ends, as it began, with the thought of Christ's redemptive work.

[1] Col. i. 14–17 (M.).

[2] *πλήρωμα*. In ii. 9 Paul states that this *Pleroma*, or plenitude, dwelt in Christ bodily, *σωματικῶς*.

[3] Col. i. 18–20 (M.).

VI. Christ and God

To St. Paul, Christ was the perfect Saviour, and the one Lord of men. Yet St. Paul retained the stern monotheism of his ancestral faith. What then was the relation in his thought between Jesus Christ the Lord, and God the Father? Had St. Paul two Gods, or did he think of one God, and of a divine being, nearly, but not quite, God?

Such questions do not seem even to have arisen in his mind, and would probably have aroused his indignant surprise that his faith could so be misunderstood. To St. Paul, to use a modern phrase, Christ had 'the value of God'. He prayed to Christ, and gave to Him a worship which would be idolatry, if given to one who, as some modern scholars claim, was only the supreme religious hero of the race. But St. Paul's devotion to Christ did not seem to him an infringement of the supreme rights of God. It did not obscure God from him. Instead, it made certain for him God's holy love.

It is doubtful if St. Paul ever called Christ God,[1] but it is clear that he gives to Christ a place which can properly belong only to one who is divine. Yet so inseparable were God and Christ in his experience that his faith in Christ in no way embarrasses his faith in God. Christ is God's, and we are Christs'.[2] When Paul called men to allegiance to Christ, he knew that

[1] Unless it be in Rom. ix. 5, where the R.V. text translates 'of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever'. But in view of Paul's general usage it seems better to adopt one of the alternatives of the R.V. Margin. If the Epistle to Titus can be regarded as Paul's, there is a parallel passage in ii. 13, but here, too, the translation is uncertain. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 23.

he was doing God's work. His ambassadorship for Christ was on God's behalf. God was, as it were, entreating men through him, whilst his appeal on behalf of Christ was that men should be reconciled to God.[1] To serve Christ is to be well-pleasing to God.[2] The exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord, so far from being an indignity to God, is for the glory of God the Father.[3] Often Paul so interchanges the words 'Lord' and 'God' as to show that in his experience Christ and God are almost indistinguishable. Christians are, at once, those who are called to be Jesus Christ's, and those whom God has chosen in the grace of Christ.[4] His own ministry as an apostle he assigns both to God and to Christ.[5] The Gospel which he preaches he describes as a revelation alike from God and from Christ.[6] So, too, the Holy Spirit is both the 'Spirit of God' and 'the Spirit of Christ'.[7] It is through the gifts which God bestows that Christians are one body in Christ.[8] To eat to the Lord is to give thanks to God. We need to live and die with the Lord as those do who remember that they will have to stand before the judgement seat of God.[9] The glorying which befits the Christian is a glorying in God or in Christ.[10]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20. [2] Rom. xiv. 8.
[3] Phil. ii. 11. [4] Rom. i. 6; Gal. i. 6.
[5] Cp. Gal. i. 16 and 2 Cor. v. 18 with Rom. i. 5, 2 Cor. v. 20, x. 8, xiii. 10.
[6] Rom. xv. 15–19. Gal. i. 16 and Rom. i. 4 f.; Gal. i. 12.
[7] See especially Rom. viii. 9. [8] Rom. xii. 3 ff.
[9] Rom. xiv. 6–12 ('The judgement-seat of Christ' of the A.V. has inferior MS. authority).
[10] Cp. Rom. v. 11 and 1 Cor. i. 3; xv. 31; 2 Cor. x. 17; Phil. i. 26; iii. 3. A full list of such parallels is given in Feine, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*[3], 1919, pp. 218 f.

It is clear from passages such as these that to St. Paul Christ was not—to use Origen's unhappy phrase—a 'second God'.[1] The Father was, indeed, primary. It was God who sent forth Christ, and grudged Him not; God who highly exalted Him.[2] It was of God's good pleasure that in Him the plenitude of God should dwell in Him bodily.[3] But subordination does not necessarily mean inferiority. Christ was not for Paul a demigod, nor did his faith in Christ impinge upon his faith in God. Instead, his faith in God the Father derived its certainty from his faith in the Son of God.

Against this conclusion, one passage, 1 Corinthians xv. 24–8, stands in apparent contradiction, for here St. Paul states that, when Christ has accomplished His work, He will hand it over to God, 'that God may be all in all'. The passage occurs in a chapter strongly influenced by views on the Last Things which St. Paul retained from his Jewish days. It is possible that, in the same way as his eschatology was at this stage only partly Christianized, so here St. Paul, influenced by the teaching given in some Jewish Apocalypses that the Messianic Kingdom will be only temporary,[4] has, in this one instance, relapsed into a view of Christ which makes His importance terminable. Johannes Weiss, commenting on this passage, remarks that the fact that primitive Christianity took over from Judaism this idea of the temporary nature of the Messianic Kingdom 'is a proof

[1] *Against Celsus*, v. 39.
[2] Gal. iv. 4; Rom. viii. 32; Phil. ii. 9.
[3] Col. i. 19. Cp. Eph. i. 3–14.
[4] Thus *4 Ezra*, vii. 28 f., gives the period as 400 years. Cp. Rev. xx. 4.

that here finally Monotheism breaks through, and overcomes a possible dualism'.[1] To speak thus of a 'possible dualism' seems a departure from Weiss's usual insight into St. Paul's experience. In that experience there was no 'dualism' between faith in Christ and faith in God. It is, indeed, possible, as we have seen, that in this one instance, St. Paul, influenced by the Apocalyptic Judaism of his pre-Christian days, speaks of Christ as a temporary intermediary, instead of as an abiding mediator. But this conclusion is by no means necessary. The words occur in a rhetorical passage based on the eighth Psalm, and it is probable that St. Paul is thinking here, not of the place of Christ, but of His function as redeemer, and is looking forward, not to the termination of His authority as Lord, but to the completion of His work, when, at the last, He shall hand over to the Father a perfected Kingdom.[2]

Whatever may be the meaning of this difficult passage, in general, this, at least, seems clear. For St. Paul, Christ was One divine, and yet no rival of God. In confessing Christ, he felt he was confessing God.

St. Paul's writings do not then provide us with a formal Christology. He was more concerned to preach Christ than to define Him, and he found in

[1] *Comm. in loc.*, p. 359. Cp. his comment in *Urchristentum*, p. 363: 'In spite of all his worship of Christ, Paul finally stands fast by his Jewish standpoint, according to which the rule of the Messiah was a temporally limited episode in the history of the world, not an eternal and permanent final state'. 'At the end of the Apocalyptic drama', Christ 'steps back into the rank of creatures'.

[2] Cp. Chap. vi., pp. 262 f.

Christ not a 'problem', but the answer to his own deepest needs and the needs of men. The questions which perplexed later Christian centuries had not yet arisen. But if St. Paul does not attempt to solve the relation of the divine Lord to God the Father he succeeds where later theologians often failed, for he does interpret God in a Christian way. God was for him, neither the stern Lawgiver of his earlier Jewish faith, nor the attributeless abstraction of Greek philosophy. God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and it was through 'the grace of Christ' that he knew 'the love of God'. So, although St. Paul gave no intellectual definition of the relation of the Son to the Father, he secured what is a prior necessity for Christian faith: he united in his imagination and his devotion faith in God and faith in Christ. He did not attempt to define the nature of Christ in terms of God and man, as if Christ were the unknown quantity, whilst the meaning of God and man was already known. Instead, he saw in Christ the revelation of God. Christ was the image of the unseen God. Seeking to know only Christ and Him crucified, he learnt to know Godin a Christian way. He had 'the mind of Christ',[1] and in Christ he learnt to rethink his thought of God, and understand God's saving will for men. 'The Glory of God' had shone 'in the face of Jesus Christ'.[2] God was the God in whose divine life Christ shared, the God whose holy love Christ's earthly life and death revealed.

So, in gaining a new Lord, St. Paul gained a new conception of God and of God's dealing with the race, and it is to this new conception of God that we have now to turn.

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 16. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

CHAPTER III

THE GOD WHOM CHRIST REVEALS

IT is a familiar fact of missionary experience that, whilst converts from paganism readily pass to the recognition of the place of Christ, and the substitution of His worship for that of all the gods or demons whom before they loved or feared, only very slowly, if at all, do most succeed in Christianizing their idea of God. Christ represents for them the active power which before they called by many names. God still remains as the distant deity with whom they are but little concerned, but whom they feel they already partly know. And the early history of the Church, like that of the mission-field to-day, provides many illustrations of the retention of pagan views of God side by side with a genuinely Christian estimate of Christ, so that, not only an Apologist like Justin Martyr, but a theologian of the profundity of Origen, can speak as if the God of Christianity were still the unknown and ineffable Absolute of pagan thought.

I. St. Paul's Experience of God

St. Paul had the immense advantage of having been bred in Judaism. Always had God been for him the living God, the creator of heaven and earth, the guide of human history, who must at all costs be obeyed. Yet his conversion meant, not only the

recognition of Jesus as the exalted Lord; it meant the transformation of his idea of God. He saw God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, and that involved a radical alteration in his conception of God, and of God's dealing with the race.

The Jews, as modern Jewish scholars remind us, did not lack the realization of the love and mercy of God, and there were those who found in the Law their joy and boast.[1] But had Paul been among those who found satisfaction in Judaism, he would not have become a Christian. As we have seen, some aspects of contemporary Judaism were stern and sombre, and it was probably by these that Paul had been chiefly influenced. We find in Ecclesiasticus frequent references to God as Father, but that seems to have been a peculiarity of the circle of pious Jews from whom that book arose. In general it was the transcendence of God that was chiefly emphasized. So high and exalted was He that His name might not be uttered save in the temple cult.[2] With this extreme awe of God, there went a fear of God's judgement which for some Jews, at least, made the expectation of the Last Day less an anticipation of reward than a dread of God's condemnation. God would give to the righteous the joys of eternal life, but then who were the righteous? Popular belief saw in the Last Day the vindication of the Jews and the destruction of their enemies. But

[1] Cf. especially the writings of Mr. C. G. Montefiore as e.g. his essay on *The Spirit of Judaism*, in Jackson and Lake, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, I, 1920, pp. 35–81, with its attractive quotations from Rabbinic sayings and ancient prayers of the Jewish liturgy.

[2] So the Septuagint renders Lev. xxiv. 16 ('He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death'), 'Whoso nameth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death'. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter*[3], 1926, p. 308.

there were those who, with finer sensibility of sin, realized that that Day might be a day of sorrow also for the Jews. Thus in *4 Ezra*, which, as we have seen, though written after Paul's time, probably reflects a phase of Judaism similar to that of Paul's pre-Christian days, we have the sternest estimate of the sins of the Jews. God revealed His glory to the Jews when He gave them the Law, but He did 'not take from them the evil heart', that His 'Law might bring forth fruit in them'. As the writer contemplates the sins of Jews and Gentiles, he exclaims, 'When was it that the inhabitants of the earth did not sin before thee? Or what nation hath so kept thy precepts? Individual men of note indeed thou mayst find to have kept thy precepts; but nations thou shalt not find'.[1]

St. Paul was not one who could comfort himself with compromises. If the Law was the complete expression of God's dealing with the race, then recompense was the fixed principle of His rule. And like the writer of *4 Ezra*, Paul had found that to be a Jew was not necessarily to keep the Jewish Law. We have seen how poignantly Paul describes his sense of failure.[2] He had thought he kept the Jewish Law and then he discovered that the commandment 'Thou shalt not covet' he could not obey, and that the very attempt to obey it only increased the sense of sin. We cannot understand the peculiar intensity of St. Paul's references to the love of God unless we assume that, like Luther later, his failure to win righteousness drove him to think of God not with love, but fear. And, as Luther discovered from his own bitter experience, what men fear they hate, and fear leads at

[1] *4 Ezra*, iii. 4–36. Cp. the passage quoted on p. 35.
[2] See earlier on Rom. vii. 7–25, p. 36, and cp. pp. 129–32.

length to the wish that God were not.[1] God, the judge, whose commands he could not fulfil; recompense regarded as the principle of God's providence—such were the ideas which made the tragedy of Paul's pre-Christian life.

St. Paul's conversion brought to him a conception of God which freed him from that terror, for he learnt that God's glory was to be seen, not in the stern visage of a judge, but in the face of Jesus Christ. No longer could strict recompense be regarded as the sole principle of God's relationship to men, for the Messiah had appeared, not in vindictive splendour, but with 'the meekness and gentleness' of Jesus. Jesus had died upon the Cross, and God had raised Him up.

In violent reaction to the genial 'liberalism' of pre-war years, the more modern 'Theology of Crisis' would have us see in this dread of God the dominant note, not of Paul's Judaism only, but of his Christianity. There are few more moving books in recent theology than Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans* [2] which has fascinated many of the younger men in the German Church. 'The reality of religion,' he writes, 'is strife and vexation, sin and death, devil and hell. We cannot wish religion for anyone, commend it to him, or seek for its reception. It is a misfortune which breaks in on some men with a fatal necessity, and passes from them to others.'[3] 'Religion is the most perilous opponent, apart from God, that man has on this side of death.'[4] 'Religion serves only to reveal to the full our Godlessness.' Religion 'as a possession

[1] Cp. his *De timore Dei Sermo* assigned to 1514. Weimar Ed. IV, p. 660.

[2] *Der Römerbrief*. Our references are to the edition of 1923.

[3] P. 241. [4] P. 250.

and activity of men, is "flesh". It shares in the perplexity and the essential worldliness of all that is human.' 'It does not liberate; worse than anything else, it holds us bound.' 'It is "flesh", and all flesh is grass.'[1] What Gospel then had Paul to preach? Barth finds that Gospel in the words 'God sent his Son because of sin.' This is 'the liberating word which religion does not find'. It 'is to be described only in strong negations, to be preached only as a paradox, to be grasped only as the *absurdum* which as such is the *credibile*, because it is the divine reaction against sin. The vexation which it causes us is a reflexion of the vexation which we are to God'.[2]

With such an interpretation, we could not speak of St. Paul's message of God, for, if Barth be right, God remained for him the 'altogether other', the mysterious and awful unknown, and all Paul's Gospel lay in the announcement of God's inscrutable act of sending His Son to die upon the Cross, because of sin. But such an interpretation seems as extreme as that of the 'liberalism' to which it is opposed. Paul, in the mental distress which preceded his conversion, may have felt God to be his 'most dangerous opponent', but it is perverse so to describe his experience of God in his Christian days. Awe remained, and the sense of God's utter power and majesty. Yet the awful holy God was now for him the God of love. And, because of this paradox, the dominant note of St. Paul's Christian life was not fear, but confidence. Christianity meant more for him than the dumb reception of an unintelligible fact. It gave him light where there had been darkness, and brought to him an in-

[1] P. 259. [2] Pp. 259–61 on Rom. viii. 3.

vincible courage, for, since God had been revealed in Christ Jesus, he knew that nothing could separate him from God's love.

Yet Barth's interpretation may do us good service if it reminds us of the dark background of St. Paul's thought. The easy Christianity from which Barth is in reaction was quite alien from St. Paul's idea of God. It spoke of God's love as if it were obvious, and so made it seem, first trite and ordinary, and then incredible. For St. Paul, the love of God was not obvious. It was a surprising wonder. He was certain of God's love, not because of any belief in the natural lovableness of men, but because he knew God in Christ. 'God grudged not His own Son, but gave Him up for us all.'[1] It was because of that, that he had his certainty. This new conception of God did away with all ideas of human merit. The supreme proof of God's love lies here, that 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'.[2] God, then, was not first of all the avenging judge. When we deserved only condemnation, He sent His Son who died for us. This new fact meant for St. Paul a complete transformation of his idea of God. No longer could recompense be regarded as the final principle of God's character. Instead, God was revealed in Christ as a God of grace.

Characteristic of St. Paul's thought of God is his phrase 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'[3] —God the awful, holy God, and yet, God made manifest in Christ. As such, He is our Father, but that word 'Father' does not seem to have been for Paul the normal name for God. Under the impulse of the

[1] Rom. viii. 32. [2] Rom. v. 8.
[3] Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3; xi. 31; Col. i. 3; Eph. i. 3.

Spirit, he, too, could, in the glow of enthusiasm, venture to call God by the intimate name of *Abba*,[1] Father. But, in general, he speaks of God as 'God and Father', 'father' being less God's name than a description of God's grace.

Although St. Paul thus retains his pre-Christian sense of God's majesty and power, he yet thinks of God as intimately concerned with the affairs of men. It is God who chooses men for salvation, and who tests their hearts.[2] He it is who gives to the Church its leaders and its gifts.[3] He is the God of the believer's hope who can fill them with joy and peace that they may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit.[4] And in the great doxology with which he begins his Epistle to the Ephesians, the whole course of men's salvation is assigned to God's gracious will.[5] But St. Paul thought of God, not only as one concerned with the work of the Church and the redemption of men. He writes of Him as of One who was ready to help in every kind of trouble, and who was interested in all that His servants sought to do. God can supply all His children's needs.[6] When a friend of his recovered from illness, St. Paul saw in that God's mercy, both to the friend and to himself.[7] Generosity to the poor is praise to God.[8] It is God's grace which inspires generous giving and personal kindness.[9] God is the God of love and peace.[10] Because of his complete trust in God, St. Paul was enabled to be, at once, a brave interpreter of sorrow, and a sympa-

[1] Rom. viii. 15.
[2] 1 Thess. ii. 12 and 4.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 28.
[4] Rom. xv. 13.
[5] Eph. i. 2–14. Cp. ii. 4–10.
[6] Phil. iv. 19.
[7] Phil. ii. 27.
[8] 2 Cor. ix. 11. Cp. Phil. iv. 18.
[9] 2 Cor. viii. 1 and 16.
[10] 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

thetic friend. 'The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. He so comforts in every kind of trouble that we can learn to comfort others. Thus sorrow was for St. Paul robbed of its bitterness, for even sorrow could become an equipment for further service, through a fresh discovery of God's love.[1]

Thus St. Paul's conversion not only brought to him a new Lord to serve; it enabled him to think of God in a new way. God was the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. His glory had been seen in the face of Christ, and so Paul could think of God not with awe alone, but with a childlike trust. He knew himself set apart not only to preach Christ, but to proclaim the holy love of God which Christ revealed.

II. St. Paul's Message of God to Jews and Judaizers

With the Jews St. Paul had much in common in his thought of God. The God he preached was the God of his fathers whom he, and all his people, served. And yet his preaching gave to the Jews great offence. More clearly than the first leaders of the Church, he realized that Christianity was not a development of Judaism; it was a new religion of world-wide significance. The Law was abrogated. Its function had been temporary and local, and Gentiles could become Christians without fulfilling its obligations. Thus St. Paul's message of God led him into a double controversy with the Jews. His claim that the Law was abrogated seemed to the Jews a direct contradiction of God's promises to the chosen people, while his bold rejection of the legal idea of God seemed, not to Jews

[1] 2 Cor. i. 3 f.

alone, but to many Jewish Christians, false and repulsive.

On God's withdrawal of the special privileges of the Jews St. Paul has written at length in Romans ix.–xi. The obscurity of these dark and mysterious chapters is probably due to St. Paul's own perplexity about the apparent rejection of the chosen people. To St. Paul, it was not man's response, but God's initiative, which was of prime importance. It was with God that he was concerned, not with human merit or achievement. The coming of Christ to the world was for St. Paul no accident. It was the fulfilment of God's eternal purpose. But the message of Christ's life and death the Jews, in general, had rejected, whilst many Gentiles had received it gladly. And St. Paul felt that God had chosen him to be the apostle to the Gentiles, setting him apart to this service, at his mysterious conversion. St. Paul could explain his own conversion, and his success among the Gentiles, in only one way. All was due to the determining will of God. It was this that gave him the certainty that his work would not be in vain. No one looking at the little faulty Churches he had founded would have seen in them any sign that Christianity would one day triumph. But St. Paul's confidence came, not from the character of his converts, but from his overwhelming sense of God's all-powerful grace. God would glorify, for God had foreknown and chosen. If God is on our side, who can be against us? And God is on our side. He grudged not His own Son, but gave Him up for us. How shall He not then freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? God has

given us, not victory alone, but super-victory. We have in Christ an assurance of God's love which no sorrow and no demonic power can ever shatter.[1] Our sonship with God is due, not to any merit of our own, but to God's good pleasure. It was through God's good grace that we are redeemed in the Beloved, and so have had revealed to us the secret of God's eternal plan to sum up all things in Christ.[2]

Thus St. Paul believed that, at last, the eternal purposes of God were being realized, and a way of salvation was now open, both to Jews and Gentiles. The Book of Acts speaks of Paul preaching first, throughout his journeys, to the Jews, and seeking to find in the synagogues of the Dispersion the first beginnings of his missionary success. But among their members he found little response. The Jews, whose long religious history was, as St. Paul believed, a preparation for Christianity, refused to heed the Christian message. That created for him a tremendous problem in which Jewish patriotism and Christian faith seemed to be in conflict.

Had God rejected His chosen people? Could He do so, without violating His solemn covenant? St. Paul could wish himself accursed, if, in that way, his 'brethren', his 'kinsmen according to the flesh', could be saved. Yet few of them accepted the Gospel which he preached. His Jewish opponents argued that God could not reject the chosen people. St. Paul answers that God is not thus restricted. The problem of the relation of God's prescience and man's responsibility is one of great, and probably, insoluble difficulty. In St. Paul, the antinomy receives violent

[1] Rom. viii. 30–7. [2] Eph. i. 3–10.

expression, and the natural vehemence of his temperament shows itself in the excesses of his dialectic. Against the claim that God could not reject the chosen people, St. Paul adduces statements from the Jewish scriptures which assert God's arbitrary power. 'Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated'; 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion'. As Pharaoh's case shows, God 'hardeneth whom He will'. Again, 'hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?' [1] We are reminded of John Byrom's lines:

> 'Hath not the potter power to make his clay
> Just what he pleases? Well, and tell me pray,
> What kind of potter must we think a man
> Who does not make the best of it he can?
> Who making some fine vessels of his clay,
> To show his power, throws all the rest away,
> Which, in itself, was equally as fine?
> What an idea this of Power divine!'

It is because we have learnt from Christ Himself, and from the greatest of His servants, St. Paul, to think of God as holy love, that it is impossible for us to think of Him as arbitrary power. But St. Paul's Old Testament quotations go far beyond the real scope of his argument. He is not thinking of God predestinating some men to punishment.[2] His prime concern in this passage is not with the ultimate destiny of individuals, but with the historic function

[1] Rom. ix. 13, 16, 21.

[2] Cp. *Enchiridion c* where St. Augustine speaks of God 'justly predestinating' some 'to punishment' and 'mercifully predestinating' others 'to grace'.

of Jew and Gentile. But, in view of the effect of his unguarded words, we could wish that he had not allowed himself to be carried away by the violence of his dialectic.

St. Paul's teaching on God's sole sovereignty is not, as with Calvinism, a logical construction. It is intuitive, rather than intellectual, an expression of that sense of creaturely dependence which is part of man's response to the *mysterium tremendum*, the awful mystery of the Divine. At once, St. Paul becomes inconsistent, as all must be who emphasize the sole power of God; and yet have learnt from Christ to speak of God's holy love. Paul proceeds to explain the rejection of the Jews, not by God's predestination, but by their own lack of faith.[1] As we shall see when we are studying St. Paul's hope for the world, St. Paul is meditating on God's saving purpose for the world, and looking forward to the time when at last, Jews and Gentiles shall alike be saved, and thus God's universal grace attain its glorious consummation.

We feel in this passage that St. Paul, at times, is browbeating not only his opponents but his own perplexities. Yet unduly violent as is much of his argumentation here, in his main contention he is reproducing the teaching of his Lord. None have a pre-emptive right to privilege. The vineyard may be taken away from those who will not share with God its fruits.[2] The lesson which St. Paul is trying in these chapters to teach is one which has not lost for us its meaning. Thus when professed adherents of

[1] Rom. ix. 30–x. 21. For the inconsistency, compare the prayer which, we are told, was offered once by Spurgeon, a modern Calvinist, 'Gather in Thine elect, and then, O Lord, elect some more'.

[2] Matt. xxi. 33–41.

Christianity deny that Christianity can be a religion for the coloured races they are repeating in another form the error which St. Paul attacks. No nation and no race has the right to claim to be the sole recipients of God's grace. Election is not for privilege, but for service, and God's favour is not dependent on men's birth or colour. He can find in every race some who will hear His word.

But the abrogation of the Law meant for St. Paul not only that the Gentiles could freely receive the blessings of the Gospel; it meant also a complete rejection of the idea that 'Law' and legalism was an adequate expression of God's dealing with the race.

It is here that St. Paul advanced furthest beyond the position of the leaders of the Jerusalem Church. As we have seen, all Christians alike believed that 'Christ had died for our sins' and that He rose again.[1] But the other Apostles failed to work out to the full the implicates of their new faith. With them, the difference between Christianity and Judaism lay in the recognition by Christians of the Messiahship of Jesus, of His death for our sins, and His resurrection. With St. Paul, the difference extended over the whole range of religious experience. It was summed up in his new conception of God.

To Paul as a Jew, the Law had seemed the perfect expression of the divine will. He had sought to be 'just before God', and the very intensity of his endeavour had led him to realize the inadequacy of legalism, and, at his conversion, he appeared as the protagonist, not of a Christianized Judaism, but of a

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3 f.

new religion, independent of national privileges, and of universal significance. Thus for him the Gentiles would not be better Christians by adding to their Christian faith obedience to the Jewish Law. God did not deal with men in terms of legalism. Now, at last, He had shown to the full His grace. A new way of 'righteousness' had been revealed—a righteousness which could not be earned by 'works'. It was given by God, and appropriated by faith.

We have already seen with what vividness St. Paul writes of God, and how gratefully he acknowledges God's fatherly care and intimate concern in his own and his converts' lives. In two famous passages, Galatians iii. 13 f. and Romans iii. 21–31, St. Paul deals with the relation of the new way of faith to the old way of merit, and it is to these passages that we have now to turn. They are passages which it is difficult to study with unbiased minds. Theology has inevitably to express in the categories of its age the Christian revelation, and these passages have long been utilized in the service of theories of the Atonement which, like that of Anselm, are based on medieval ideas of feudal obligation and the ecclesiastical praxis of penance, or like that of the Reformers on the idea of strict and punitive justice. Such theories have still their influence. They claim to find in these passages their starting-point. If their claim be right, then we cannot say that St. Paul completely substituted grace for law in his interpretation of God's dealings with men, for law, not holy love, would still remain the dominant principle of God's working.

The first passage, Galatians iii. 13 f., occurs in the Epistle in which St. Paul passionately opposes the claim of the Judaizers that Gentile converts, too,

must keep the Jewish Law. St. Paul describes such an attempt to keep times and seasons, not as an added perfection, but as a relapse from liberty to bondage.[1] Circumcision would bring to Gentile Christians no gain. It would, instead, be the sign that they had gratuitously put themselves under that tyranny of the Law which Paul himself had found intolerable. Legalism and Christianity were incompatible. One meant the slavish and hopeless endeavour to keep the whole of the Jewish Law; the other, the glad reception by faith of the grace of God, and a life 'in the Spirit' which showed itself in the possession of those attributes of character against which there is no law.[2]

Such is the general teaching of the Epistle. It receives its most pointed expression in the immediate context of the passage which we have now before us. In it, St. Paul sharply contrasts the way of faith and the way of Law. Boldly he claims that the way of faith is actually the more venerable. Did not Scripture teach that 'Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness'? The way of the Law brought with it an inevitable curse, for, as another Scripture said, 'Cursed is everyone who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them'. And no man can completely fulfil the Law's demands. Thus all who are under the Law are under this curse. But Christ has removed this curse from us, 'having become a curse for us'; for it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'.[3]

It is in this context alone that we can hope to understand the connexion in Paul's thought between

[1] Gal. iv. 9 f. [2] Gal. v. 2 f., 16, 22 f.
[3] Gal. iii. 6–14.

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the death of Christ and the removal of the curse of the Law.

The passage has often been interpreted by reference to the penal justice of God as if it taught that Christ endured the actual curse of God. In Calvin's words, Christ 'bore the weight of the divine anger, that, smitten and afflicted, He experienced all the signs of an angry and avenging God'.[1] Or, as Luther puts it, 'He had in His tender and innocent heart to feel God's wrath and judgement against sin, to taste for us eternal death and damnation, and, in short, suffer all that a condemned sinner has earned and must suffer eternally'.[2] If that be St. Paul's interpretation of Christ's death, then, not grace, but penal justice, was still for him the final principle of God's rule, for only when the claims of penal justice had been satisfied by Christ's endurance of the curse of the Law, was the way of grace available for men. We are familiar from Church history, and from missionary experience, with the slowness with which converts throw off pre-Christian views of God, but it is hard to believe that in the very Epistle in which St. Paul most vigorously denounces the legal conception of religion, he should have retained, at the very centre of his Christian faith, that legal idea of God which interprets the Law as the full expression of the will of God, so that its judgement was the judgement of God.

Whatever be the meaning of the difficult phrase 'He became a curse for us', in its context, this, at least, is clear, the 'curse' is not the 'curse' of God, but of

[1] *Institutes* (1559 edit.), II, sec. 11. Calvin is careful to state that God was not actually 'hostile to Him or angry with Him'.

[2] From a Sermon of the year 1537. Weimar Ed. XLV, p. 240.

the Law.[1] Law, as Paul conceived it, although divine in origin, was not an adequate expression of the divine character and will. In the heat of his invective, in this Epistle, he apparently compares bondage to the Law to pagan bondage to Elemental Spirits.[2] And, throughout, Paul is comparing two conceptions of religion, one, the way of faith, the other, that of legalism.

With great persuasiveness a recent commentator on this Epistle has explained the passage as Paul's *reductio ad absurdum* of the whole legal conception of religion. 'Law and he who takes his stand on law, must say that Christ, having died on the cross, is a sinner—i.e. that under law no one could come to such a death who was not himself guilty of sin—as vividly the law says it in the words of the quotation. But in that verdict of legalism it condemns itself, and in the fact that Christ the righteous died the death of the cross it is evident that the government of God is not one of legalism, but of love and of vicarious suffering, the righteous for the wicked.'[3] Thus the death of Christ upon the Cross has removed from us the curse of the Law, for it is, in itself, the supreme proof that God's dealing with the world is not one of strict recompense.

Such seems to be the ultimate implicate of this passage, but it is possible that St. Paul does not here

[1] In Deut. xxi. 23, the curse is indeed the curse of God, but the idea in this verse in Deut. belongs to a different world of thought to that of Paul. The man hanged must not stay on the gallows all night, for the unburied corpse would 'defile the land'.

[2] See later on Gal. iv. 3, 9, pp. 135.

[3] Burton, *Comm. in loc.*, *I.C.C.*, 1921, pp. 173 f. The whole exposition of this passage pp. 163–77 merits careful study.

pause to draw this conclusion. Often he speaks of the Law as a half-personified tyrant, hostile to man as God is not.[1] The blasphemous cry, 'Jesus is cursed', may well be an echo of the Jewish accusation that Jesus as crucified was accursed.[2] It may be that St. Paul is here turning the force of the accusation. If Law, that grim tyrant, had any rights, it was only over those who were his slaves. Christ had met for us all its demands. His death fulfilled its curse, and set us free from any of its claims. If so, St. Paul is writing as a man of the first century, accustomed to think, not abstractly, but pictorially,[3] and his words require translation before they can be intelligible to men of our age. And that translation would involve some such rendering as that which Dr. Burton gives. The Law misrepresents God. Its curse is not God's curse, but a curse connected with an interpretation of God's dealing with the world which, now that Christ has come, we know to be inadequate. God's dealing with the race is not one of strict recompense. It is one of holy love, and, by the death of Christ, we are freed from the tyranny of legalism, and know God as He is.

A similar teaching is given, and with less obscurity, in the other great controversial passage, Romans iii. 21–31.

In this passage St. Paul expounds the new system of 'righteousness by faith and unto faith' which, in the preface to the Epistle, he had announced as the

[1] See later, pp. 130 ff. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

[3] On the 'concrete' and pictorial modes of thought which characterized that age see later, pp. 130 f. The Law was thus at times for Paul one of the tyrants which oppress this present evil age—an age from which Christ has set us free. So later pp. 153–6.

distinctive element in the Gospel.[1] All that the Law could do was to create a consciousness of sin. In Christianity there has been disclosed a 'righteousness of God' which is quite independent of the Law—a 'righteousness' which comes through faith in Jesus Christ. Hitherto God had not adequately revealed His attitude to the sin of men. Had He judged it, men must have perished. Instead, His attitude had been one of signal forbearance, and His forbearance is to be explained, not by His indifference to human sin, but by His intention so to deal with it in the death of Christ as to be, at once, 'the just and the justifier'. Such seems to be the general meaning of this difficult passage. The word translated in our versions as 'propitiation' (*ἱλαστήριον*) has been much discussed. Probably it is not a noun, but an adjective (Christ 'whom God set forth as propitiatory'[2]). The reference is thus general. It could be taken to denote, not Jewish sacrifices merely, but all means that men adopt to win God's favour. For us the metaphor has little meaning, for we do not live in lands where worship consists chiefly in sacrifices. To those who heard St. Paul's words, the idea that men must win God's favour by sacrifices, or by offerings, was axiomatic. What was new and strange in St. Paul's declaration was, not that there were such means of 'propitiation', but that these were provided, not by men, but by God. That would sound, indeed, a violent paradox.

As we see, say, a vast crowd of outcastes in India,

[1] Rom. i. 17.

[2] So in 4 Macc. xvii. 22 the death of the martyrs is spoken of as accepted by God as 'propitiatory'. On the meaning of the term see Sanday and Headlam, *Comm. in loc.*, *I.C.C.*, pp. 87 f., and Rashdall, *The Idea of Atonement*, 1920, pp. 130 ff.

killing goats and cocks, and offering up their blood to appease the goddess whom they fear, it is hard to believe that if such become Christians they will at once cease from what, for them, has been the most obvious expression of religion. Yet in the great mass-movement Churches of South India, whose members are chiefly drawn from these outcaste communities, we find, not only that no such sacrifices are offered even by the least Christian members, but that the very desire to offer them has gone. And so it has generally been. As von Harnack points out, wherever the Christian preaching has been successful, the altars of sacrifice have been deserted. The death of Christ has brought to an end the sacrifices of blood.[1]

In what way Christ is set forth as 'propitiatory', St. Paul does not say. The reference to 'blood' shows that it is the death of Christ he has chiefly in view, whilst the words 'through faith', show that he is thinking here of an act of God which becomes effectual through our faith. Closely connected with this sentence are the succeeding words, 'to the manifestation of His righteousness'.[2] The words recall the opening words of this passage, 'A way of righteousness is revealed, independent of the Law'. In the death of Christ that new way of righteousness is revealed. Sacrifices were a witness to man's sense of the estrangement between man and God, and an attempt on man's side to remove that estrangement. Now God, from His side, had sought to remove the estrangement. As St. Paul puts it elsewhere, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself'.[3] That was the surprising

[1] *Das Wesen des Christentums*, 1906 edit., p. 99.
[2] εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 19.

paradox. God was other than men had thought. In the new way of righteousness, it is He that reconciles. We have here then no idea of punitive justice; no suggestion that there was a conflict within the Godhead of love and justice, or that the demands of punitive justice had to be met before love could have its way. God reveals Himself as 'just' and 'justifying'. He is not 'just', and, in spite of this, the 'justifier'. On the contrary, His 'righteousness' shows itself in His 'counting just or righteous'. It receives its first perfect expression in the revelation of His reconciling grace in the Cross of Christ. No longer is God to be thought of as seeking to be propitiated. He does not deal with men on the principle of strict recompense, so that men have to earn their salvation by something that they do or offer. It is God who takes the initiative in reconciliation, and His grace is to be received through faith. We know now that God's 'forbearance' was not due to indifference, for He has so shown His forgiving love as to expose the sinfulness of sin. We are reminded of the Psalmist's words, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared'.[1] God's forgiveness was not for St. Paul a mere amnesty, costing nothing to God, and arousing in men no awe nor adoration. It was a forgiveness whose meaning he had first discovered in Christ's Cross.

'Just' and 'justifying' are words which are suggestive of a court of law. 'Justify' means not 'making just', but 'declaring just'. Yet St. Paul's meaning escapes from legal ideas. There can be in law no such thing as 'justifying', or acquitting freely as a gift, 'by grace'.[2] A judge may not thus acquit without cause, whilst to

[1] Ps. cxxx. 4. [2] Rom. iii. 24.

speak of 'justifying the ungodly',[1] that is, of 'acquitting the guilty', is a contradiction of a legal judgement. A judge who so acts is no judge at all. Here, as in the passage in Galatians (iii. 13), St. Paul's choice of terms is determined by the controversy in which he was engaged. He uses the categories of his opponents, that he may make his message intelligible to his hearers. The terms he uses are to us strange and unfamiliar. But to those who heard them at the first, it was not his terms that would have caused perplexity. It was the message that he proclaimed of a God who sought, not to be reconciled, but to reconcile, who had in Christ revealed His free forgiving love. As St. Paul reiterates in Romans iv. 7, 'God does not reckon up sin'.[2] He is not one who keeps 'account books', writing down the debt we owe Him. God is not a God who deals with men by strict recompense. He is a God of grace, and 'to justify' means, not the sentence of a judge, but the forgiveness of a father. Yet this forgiveness, as it has come to us through the Cross of Christ, is a forgiveness to be received, not lightly, but in humble faith.

We have then in these passages no relapse into a legal conception of God, or of God's dealing with the race. As in India, the meaning of Christ's Cross has inevitably to be expressed in terms of the Hindu doctrine of *karma*, so St. Paul, arguing with Jews and Judaizing Christians, uses the legal terms in which they, as he himself had earlier done, conceived of God. But the terms he used were inadequate to his thought. His new conception of God was not juristic. Not recompense, but reconciliation, had become for him the prime word of religion. It is not the justice of

[1] Rom. iv. 5. [2] Cp. 2 Cor. v. 19.

the law-courts of which he speaks. It is the grace of the Father, who has shown His holy love to us in the death of Christ.

III. St. Paul's Message of God to Pagans and Converts from Paganism

In his contact with Jews St. Paul had to preach, not so much a new God, as a new conception of God due to the revelation of God's holy love in His gift to the world of the crucified Christ. To pagans, his message of God would have sounded altogether strange and unfamiliar, and St. Paul's letters show that then, as now, converts from paganism are very slow in Christianizing their idea of God. First they must learn to substitute for the gods they had worshipped and the demons they had feared, the one Lord Jesus Christ. Only later, if at all, can they pass on from this to interpret God in a Christian way.

For St. Paul's preaching to pagans, we have but slight and uncertain data. Some speeches are preserved for us in Acts, but we cannot be sure to what extent these speeches represent St. Paul's words, and it is possible, as some suppose, that they are coloured by the gentle and irenic nature of its author.

Our surest source for the content of St. Paul's preaching to a pagan audience is to be found in 1 Thessalonians i. 9 f., for here we have St. Paul's own description of what that preaching was. 'Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a true and living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come.' God, the one true and living God, Jesus whose mission was attested by the resurrection, and who delivers us from the impending

judgement—such St. Paul declares was, in outline, what Christianity meant at first to his converts from paganism.

The Apostle to the Gentiles derived no inspiration for his service from any sense of the natural nobility of pagan aspirations, or from a sentimental appreciation of pagan virtues. He had few opportunities of knowing the higher aspects of pagan thought. What thrust itself under his notice was an idolatry inseparably connected with sexual excess.

The vivid description given in Romans of the moral and religious failure of paganism is little more than a reproduction of the commonplaces of Jewish criticism, and apparently owes much to the Book of Wisdom which, reviving the polemic of Isaiah xliv., similarly condemns the worship of the creature instead of the Creator.[1] St. Paul's description is not to be read as the impartial verdict of a student of religion. It is rather the passionate indictment of one, who, trained himself from childhood to worship the one holy God, saw with sad sternness the idolatry of the pagan world —an idolatry which was intimately connected with moral degradation and with vice. Part of St. Paul's sternness is doubtless due to his excessive expectations. We are all, to an extent, the creatures of our environment. For those accustomed to worship many gods, it is harder than he seemed to realize to 'perceive through the things that are made', 'the invisible things of the world', God's 'everlasting power and divinity'. It is too harsh to say that those who thus fail are 'without excuse'.[2] We are reminded as we read St. Paul's words of the hard judgements formed on

[1] The parallels are given in Sanday and Headlam, *Comm. in loc.*, pp. 51 f.

[2] Rom. i. 20.

Hinduism by the pioneers of modern missionary work in India. Such harsh judgements it is easy for a modern student of religion to condemn from the comfortable security of his study. Of the higher aspects of Hinduism they saw, and could see, nothing. What they saw was an idolatry at once cruel and obscene, and it is little wonder if, seeing only that, they spoke of it in the strongest terms. We would not dream to-day of echoing their condemnation, yet, at times, when we, too, are confronted with the obscenity of idolatry, that condemnation becomes at least intelligible.[1] It is not surprising that St. Paul speaks in stern condemnation of an idolatry much of which was associated with sexual orgies. And there is more truth than many students of religion recognize in his description of idolatry as a choice of evil. On the wide scale of history, religion cannot be presented as a continuous progression. Where the better is known, the worse is often chosen.[2] In this passage,

[1] The writer well remembers going for the first time to Trichinopoly and reading on a tablet of Schwartz's Church there a prayer uttered by him at its dedication in 1766. 'When strangers who do not know Thy Name hear of all Thy glorious doctrines and methods of worshipping Thee preached in this house, incline, oh mercifully incline, their hearts to renounce their abominable idolatry and worship Thee, O God, in the name of Christ.' '*Abominable idolatry*' we would not use such a phrase to-day, yet any one who has seen the obscene carvings of the neighbouring Vaishnavite temple at Srirangam, or of the Saivite temple at Tanjore, the other scene of Schwartz's labours, will understand the phrase, especially as he remembers the 'sacred prostitution' with which this temple worship has been connected.

[2] Thus in Hinduism, in the *Rigveda*, the austere worship of Varuna gave way to that of Indra, whilst later the pure conception of Krishna (now, through Christian influence happily rediscovered) of the *Bhagavadgita* was succeeded by the licentious conception of the most popular of the *Puranas*.

St. Paul is concerned to show the failure of the Gentile world to fulfil the will of God, and that was obvious and patent.

This condemnation of paganism was addressed to Christian readers, and forms part of St. Paul's proof that the need for the Gospel was universal. Such evidence as Acts affords shows that St. Paul had too fine a courtesy to denounce to pagans the evil of idolatry. Thus at Ephesus, the 'Town Clerk' could claim that Paul had not been guilty of blasphemy against the Goddess,[1] and yet that Goddess was the many-breasted 'Mother-goddess', whose worship was soiled with sexuality. The speeches recorded in Acts may not be the precise words of St. Paul, but we may assume that they are true to type. In these speeches, St. Paul is not concerned to condemn paganism. He seeks, instead, to win a hearing for the Christian Gospel.

The two speeches addressed by St. Paul to pagans given us in Acts both speak with marked courtesy of paganism. At Lystra, the healing of a cripple led the people to suppose that Paul and Barnabas were gods.[2] Eagerly St. Paul bade them desist from their attempted homage. They were but men like themselves, and they had come to preach the good news that men should turn from these vain things to the living god. That God had not left Himself without

[1] It is interesting to notice Chrysostom's comment that the 'Town-Clerk' was making a false statement to calm the mob. It is far more probable that he was appealing to well-known facts. Cp. Sir W. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*[10], 1908, pp. 146–57.

[2] Acts xiv. 12 ff. Naturally, as Paul was the spokesman, he was held to be the 'active' and subordinate god, whilst Barnabas was regarded as the 'inactive' and supreme god Zeus. Cp. earlier, p. 23.

witness, for He had shown His kindness in the fertility of nature. Thus brief and colourless as is the record of this speech, in its main idea it resembles the famous speech which, according to Acts, St. Paul delivered at Athens.

Grieved by the multitude of idols around him, St. Paul had proclaimed his message of Jesus and the resurrection (*anastasis*). Apparently he was understood to have spoken of two new deities; Jesus and the goddess *Anastasis*.[1] He was bidden to speak further of his message, and was summoned to the Aeropagus to declare his teaching.

As a stranger at Benares might, St. Paul complimented his hearers on being 'very religious', and, taking as his text an inscription on an altar to an 'unknown God', declared that at last God has made Himself known to men. In his plea for the spirituality of religion, and for the immanence of God in the universe, St. Paul was speaking in a way his hearers would readily understand, and for the statements of his speech abundant parallels have been collected from non-Christian and, especially, from Stoic sources.[2] That God dwells not in temples made with hands, is self-sufficient, and has made of one blood all the nations of the earth, and is not far from any of us,

[1] Acts xvii. 18.

[2] Cp. E. Norden's elaborate study of the speech in his *Agnostos Theos*, 1913, pp. 1–140. Norden seeks to show that the speech is not Paul's, but E. Meyer informs us that Norden later, in conversations with him, admitted the possibility that Luke may rightly have given the content of Paul's speech (*Ursprung und Anfänge des Christentums*, III, p. 92). Warneck remarks that the address is 'an unsurpassable model for preaching to pagans, ignorant of Christianity'. 'In China, for the quotation from Aratus, would be one from Confucius'. *Paulus im Lichte der heutigen Heidenmission*[3], 1922, p. 61 f.

for in Him we live and move and have our being so that we ought not to think of Him as if He could be represented by images—all these statements were commonplaces of the time which might have been heard from the lips of many a wandering preacher of philosophy.

It seems needless to suppose that St. Paul could not have uttered such a speech. We know too little of St. Paul's preaching to pagans to be able to say what he could, or could not do. He was too versatile a man to speak always in one tone. A missionary's preaching inevitably varies according to his audience. Thus a missionary in India does not address an audience of philosophically-minded high-caste Hindus in the same terms in which he speaks to outcaste converts. St. Paul's letters are addressed to those who already professed the Christian faith, and many of his converts were very ignorant. It is not surprising if, in an address to cultured Athenians, who as yet knew nothing of Christianity, he spoke in a different way from that in which he wrote to his Christian congregations. We may well feel, with a great modern historian, that 'the whole narrative calls forth a convincing impression of inner truth, and thus guarantees its own genuineness'.[1] There is very little in the speech which cannot be paralleled from St. Paul's writings,[2] and, in other places, he reveals the influence of Stoic words and concepts.[3] As we have seen, Tarsus was a noted seat of Stoic philosophy. It is unnecessary to suppose that St. Paul was adept

[1] Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 93. The whole of Meyer's criticism (pp. 89–108) of those who deny the genuineness of the speech is full of interest.

[2] Cp. Rom. i. 19 f.; ii. 14 f.; xi. 36.

[3] E.g. 1 Cor. iii. 21; Phil. iv. 11 f. and iv. 8 f.

in its tenets, but of its commonplaces he was certainly not ignorant.

So long as St. Paul dwelt on the generalities of religion and morality, he held his audience. But when he spoke of repentance and of Christ's resurrection from the dead, 'some mocked', and his speech was brought to an abrupt end. If he had been content to speak of immortality, they might have listened. But the idea of a resurrection from the dead contradicted the Greek conception of the relation of spirit to matter, whilst the call to repentance fell upon deaf ears.

St. Paul seems to have felt deeply his failure at Athens,[1] and at Corinth he determined in consequence 'to proclaim the mystery of God', without 'excellency of speech or of wisdom'—to have but one message only, 'Jesus Christ and him crucified'.[2] Yet that failure can easily be over-emphasized. None are harder to convert than those to whom religion is primarily a topic of speculative interest, and, judged by the standards of modern missionary experience, St. Paul's visit to Athens was, not a failure, but a success. To few, if any, modern missionaries has it been given to gain by a single speech any converts from an audience of dilettanti, interested in religious discussion, but without any sense of religious need. But St. Paul had evidently hoped much from his visit to Athens, and his disappointment was very great.

St. Paul's speech at Athens is of supreme interest as the one instance of his contact with the higher thought of the pagan world. Religious syncretism had resulted, not only in a blurring of the conception of the gods, but in a quest for the One behind the

[1] Cp. 1 Thess. iii. 3 ff. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 1 ff.

many. This quest led, not so much to monotheism, as to monism, and this monism of speculation was less exclusive than the monotheism of religion. Thus Cicero who, at times, speaks as if he believed in one God alone, when his favourite daughter Tullia died, built a temple in her honour.[1] In this he was typical of many. Rationalism had become discredited. There was a general interest in religion, but the resemblance between this religious monism and the monotheism of Christianity was only superficial. St. Paul, like others of his age, believed in the existence of demonic powers, but there was for him but one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ. The monotheistic tendency in paganism sprang 'not from religious experience but from reflection and from criticism'. Its conception of God as 'impersonal, incomprehensible and ineffable', passed easily 'into the clouds of abstraction'. Few there were who like Epictetus gained from philosophy an inner confidence in God. As the supreme God was unknowable, there was no need to give to Him an exclusive worship. The popular cults could still be shared in, for, since God was unknown, it mattered little in what forms He was worshipped. But the Christian message was of a God who had revealed Himself in Jesus Christ. So Christianity brooked no compromise. It recognized but 'one God, one truth and one salvation'.[2] Where religious interest centred, not in the gods, but in the supreme God, that supreme God was sought by the mystic way. St. Paul was a 'mystic', if by that ambiguous word is meant one who realizes eternity in time, and has a sure experience of

[1] Oepke, *Die Missionspredigt des Apostels Paulus*, p. 87.

[2] Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur*[2] (*H.B.N.T.*), p. 128.

supersensible realities, but he was not a mystic in the pagan sense, for he sought, not unity with the ineffable substrate of all being, nor deification,[1] but a relationship of childlike trust with the God whose holy love was known in Jesus Christ.

It was the difference between Christian monotheism and pagan monism which gave to the Christian message at once its power and its offence. If St. Paul had been content to speak of the God immanent in all nature, 'who is not to be served by men's hands, as though he needed anything', his message would have obtained ready acceptance, and he might have won honour from his age as many a wandering philosopher did. But then his message would have been as impotent as it would have been inoffensive. The distinctive meaning of Christianity lay in the conclusion of his speech. God was not now unknown. He had revealed Himself in one whom He 'had raised from the dead', and now 'called men everywhere to repent'.

Much of the philosophy of St. Paul's age was inspired by high moral ideals. St. Paul's call to repent would not in itself have sounded strange, and yet, in its moral demands, Christianity differed much from the best pagan thought. Sin was not thought of in relation to a personal God, and moral renewal was not regarded as the inevitable outcome of faith in the holy love of God. It was a preliminary means to deification, or part of the discipline by which a man attained to freedom. And redemption was conceived as deliverance less from guilt and the power of sin, than from the pressure of the finite, from fate and intellectual error.

[1] As in the Hermetic writings.

Apart from St. Paul's famous visit to Athens, there is no evidence to show that he had any contact with those familiar with the philosophies of his age. His prime work lay among ordinary people, who were less interested in the supreme God, than they were in the gods they served, or the demons whom they feared. For them, as for similar converts to-day, Christianity, at first, would mean, not the transformation of the idea of God, but the substitution of Christ for all the gods and demons they had trusted or feared.

It seems clear from St. Paul's Epistles that, like missionaries to-day, St. Paul found it easier to get his converts from paganism to believe in Christ than he did to get them to think of God in a Christian way. It is this which probably explains what seems, at first sight, a contradiction in his thought. In his polemic against Jews and Judaism, St. Paul had emphasized that God was not a God of law, but a God of grace. He was not one 'who kept account-books' against us. As St. Paul puts it, in a paradox, which to Jews would have sounded blasphemous, God 'justifies the ungodly'. God is the Father whose holy love had been manifested in Christ's Cross, and whose dealing with men was, not one of strict recompense, but of holy love. Yet it is clear that in his preaching to pagans, the proclamation of judgement was prominent,[1] and, in writing to Gentile converts, he speaks much of their need to prepare themselves for that dread Day when Christ would execute God's judgement. The contradiction seems only superficial. St. Paul does not really relapse into legalism. His converts would readily have received from him a series of enactments such as

[1] Cp. 1 Thess. i. 9 f. On St. Paul's preaching on the judgement of believers see later, pp. 256–60.

the Judaizers demanded, for the idea of earning salvation is congenial to the natural, pagan man. St. Paul sought, instead, to lead them to a humble trust in God, which would show itself in the works of love. But they had not learnt, as Jews had done, the prime lessons of God's righteous rule, and so they failed to feel the power of what to St. Paul was the central mystery of Christianity, that the awful holy God was the God whose grace had been revealed in the Christ who died and rose again. They were ready to accept Christ as Lord. Not easily were they humbled by the amazing grace of God. So St. Paul found that many who professed Christianity showed little of its fruits. They could talk about religion, they could show emotional fervour, they could 'speak with tongues'. Yet, in their lives, they failed to show the impress of God's holy love. It could hardly be otherwise, for the proclamation of God's holy love can scarcely be understood, except by those who have first been awed by the holiness of God.[1] For St. Paul, as for many a missionary since, the slow discovery of this fact was the greatest disappointment of his missionary life.

To one of St. Paul's moral earnestness, God's grace in Christ led to a life of humble service. The love of God, revealed in the death of Christ, aroused in him wonder, adoration, and obedience. Evidently he

[1] The writer found in India that, even in the training of Christian evangelists of long established Christian ancestry, it was necessary to begin with the stern teaching of the prophets. Amos's words 'You only have I known and therefore will I visit upon you your iniquity', are in direct contradiction to the pagan view, which many Christians are slow to abandon, that it is the business of a God to show special favour and indulgence to His worshippers.

could not understand why so many of his converts persisted in their old pagan ways, were quarrelsome, careless, and even vicious. St. Paul has to remind them that God has called them, not to uncleanness, but to holiness, and to warn them that God will not let fornication go unavenged.[1] There is no arbitrariness in God's dealings. What a man sows that he will reap.[2] If Christians are guilty of impurity they can have no part in the realm of God.[3] Instead, Christians are called to be dead to sin, but alive to God, and to dedicate their bodies as a living sacrifice to God.[4] They must be blameless and innocent, faultless children of God, so living as to shine as lights amid the darkness of the world.[5]

It was an immense demand to make of men who as pagans had seen little connexion between religion and morality. Yet St. Paul's message of God was not one of sternness only. It was a message of overwhelming joy. To St. Paul, at his conversion, had come the amazing discovery that God was not a lawgiver merely; He was the Father whose grace was known in Christ. For converts from paganism, the Christian message of God was still more strange and new. They had lived in fear of fate, of astral powers and demons, who, as they had believed, dominated their lives, and determined their destiny. Now they were summoned to a new world of spiritual reality, where they could experience the Spirit's power, and gain the confidence that God had delivered them from every tyranny and that no power of depth or height could separate them from the love of God in Christ.

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 3–7. [2] Gal. vi. 7. [3] Eph. v. 5.
[4] Rom. vi. 11; xii. 1. [5] Phil. ii. 15.

That was St. Paul's central message of God to both Jew and Gentile. To those brought up in the stern monotheism of Judaism, he proclaimed that the awful holy God was the God of holy love. To those accustomed to think of God in a pagan way, he proclaimed that the supreme God was not a God unknown, who could be worshipped under many and different forms. He was the God revealed in Christ. God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have 'the mind of Christ', we know through Him what God is like, for, in the face of Jesus Christ, the glory of God has been revealed.

CHAPTER IV

THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION

ST. PAUL has told us what he conceived his life-work to be. There had been entrusted to him the word of reconciliation. He was an ambassador on behalf of Christ, beseeching men on Christ's behalf to be reconciled to God.[1] It was his glad and sacred task to proclaim the revelation of God's grace in Christ, and to summon men to a sphere in which they might rejoice in their adoption as the sons of God, live in intimate communion with the Risen Christ, and share already in those powers of the Spirit which were the powers of the 'age to come'. The message of reconciliation was thus a message of redemption. In being reconciled to God, men were redeemed from the present evil age, and from all the tyrannies which there hold rule.

It will be convenient to deal first with this negative aspect of St. Paul's message of salvation—deliverance from the tyrannies which oppress this present age.

These tyrannies St. Paul conceived in the categories of his time, and to understand his proclamation of redemption we need to try to picture to ourselves his conception of the needs of men which formed the dark background of his own experience and his missionary

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19 f.

preaching. That requires both patience and imagination. We, too, are conscious of influences which tend to separate us from the love of God. But we think of these influences abstractly, and describe our need in such terms as the 'Spirit of the Age', 'heredity', 'environment', the 'social problem', 'laws of nature', and 'economic laws'. Such expressions belong to our age, not St. Paul's. He thought in pictures, not in concepts. The terms he uses to describe the enemies of man, Sin, Law, Death and Wrath, were to him, not vague influences, nor cold abstractions, but half-personal powers, which ruled as tyrants over this evil age, and, associated with them, were malignant demons ever ready to tempt and destroy the race of man.

Hard as it must always be for us modern men to enter into the world-view of a Jew of the first century, our task is made immensely harder by the often unrealized influence of that traditional interpretation of St. Paul's teaching which belongs, neither to his age nor ours, but to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the great theologians of the Protestant Church, St. Paul's vivid references to Sin and the Flesh were regarded as dogmatic statements, and given primary importance as the foundation of an elaborate system which claimed to be a transcript of St. Paul's theology, whilst his descriptions of Law and the Wrath of God were interpreted, not as the descriptions of hard taskmasters from whom Christ had set men free, but as final expressions of the character of God, to which even His grace revealed in Christ had somehow to be subordinated. It is impossible to understand St. Paul until we rid ourselves of all thoughts of 'Paulinism'. If we use words strictly, St. Paul had no specific doctrines of Sin and the Fall, of Law and Wrath. His

descriptions of their tyranny belong, not to his missionary message, but to that world-view which he shared with others of his age. That world-view is of importance to us only in so far as it determined the form in which he expressed his own need, and the needs of men of his own age—needs which we to-day inevitably express in terms of a world-view very different from his.

A. THE SERVITUDE OF MAN

I. The Tyranny of Sin

For St. Paul, Sin was the tyrant through whose rule all other tyrannies gained their entrance into our race. 'We are sold under Sin', like slaves bought by a cruel master. It is not merely that we do sinful acts. Sin dwells in us, compelling us against our will to do the evil deeds which we would gladly shun. Like a demonic power, Sin thus tyrannizes over men, and from his bondage none can free himself. That had been Paul's own experience. He had sought to obey the Law, and yet had failed. Sin was too strong for him. Even when he approved good, Sin forced him to do evil.[1] St. Paul believed that his experience here was typical of that of the race, and this universality of Sin's dominion he found affirmed in Scripture [2] and illustrated in the life of the world around him.

In the most elaborate of his Epistles, St. Paul describes with mordant power Sin's manifest reign over both Jew and Gentile. That reign showed itself in the Gentile world, not only in idolatry, but in the impurity to which, in his view, that idolatry inevitably

[1] Rom. vii. 14–17.

[2] Rom. iii. 10–18; a catena of passages from the Psalms.

led. In this stern denunciation of paganism, St. Paul reflects the hatred felt by the Jews for idolatry, and their association of idolatry with sexual excess. Already the Book of Wisdom had taught that 'the devising of idols was the beginning of fornication', leading to 'defiling of souls, confusion of sex, disorder in marriage, adultery and wantonness. For the worship of those unnameable idols is the beginning and cause and end of every evil'.[1] It is with the same horror that St. Paul describes the impurity, reaching even to unnatural vice, which he, too, regarded as the penalty of worshipping created things, instead of the Creator.

It is hard to accept St. Paul's condemnation as a dispassionate estimate of the paganism of his time. It is true that his condemnation is no more severe than that of Juvenal's bitter satires later against the licentiousness of Rome, but there must have been another side. As it has been aptly said, 'If society at large had been half as corrupt as it is represented by Juvenal, it would have speedily perished from mere rottenness'.[2] Common as vice might be, there were not wanting Stoic teachers who demanded chastity from men as well as women, whilst some of the inscriptions of the time make clear that, in that age too, there were homes of pure domestic bliss.[3] St. Paul himself could speak elsewhere in terms which show that he

[1] xiv. 12, 26 f. It is of interest to notice that these words occur in a section which may be with some confidence assigned to one who, like St. Paul, was a Jew of the Dispersion.

[2] Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 1904, p. 2.

[3] Cp. the 'pathetically sincere' inscription, in which a husband laments his wife with whom he had lived for more than nineteen years without a quarrel, quoted by W. R. Halliday, *The Pagan Background of Christianity*, p. 113.

knew the highest ideals of paganism, and could bid his converts contemplate such ideals in so far as there was in them any 'virtue and any praise'.[1] But those who have seen the degradation to which the association of impurity with religion can lead, will understand the vehemence of St. Paul's denunciation. A modern traveller, seeing the vile images which disgrace some of the great temples in South India, and the presence there of the temple prostitutes, is not unnaturally inclined to speak as if Hinduism were altogether bad. No one who has lived long enough in the country to gain the confidence and friendship of Hindus of pure and elevated character can so speak. But St. Paul would have had few such opportunities of intimate friendship with the nobler pagans of his time, and inevitably he judged paganism from the outside.

The Epistle to the Romans was probably written from Corinth. Corinth was a centre of the foul worship of the Great Mother, and there he would have seen the prostitute servants of the goddess. It is not surprising that this Jew, trained from childhood to think of God with awe and to shun impurity, should have been stirred to indignation by the flaunting vice of the paganism around him, and should have seen in this widespread immorality the consequence of the worship of the creature. And such idolatry seemed to him without excuse. Ignorant as were the pagans of the Jewish Law, they yet might have found in the created world the evidence for a God whose law, Paul held, was implanted in all men's hearts.

In his condemnation of paganism, St. Paul does little more than repeat the commonplaces of Jewish

[1] Phil. iv. 8.

polemic. But he is no less severe on the moral failure of his own countrymen. Priding themselves on the Law, they yet had failed to obey its commands, and so had caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the Gentiles. Some devout Jews, realizing their people's failure, fell back on the thought of God's compassion to His chosen people. Thus in that beautiful expression of Pharisaic piety, the *Psalms of Solomon*, we read:

'Unto whom art Thou good, O God, except to them that call upon the Lord?
He cleanseth from sins a soul when it maketh confession, when it maketh acknowledgement;
For shame is upon us and upon our faces on account of all these things.
And to whom doth He forgive sins, except to them that have sinned?
Thou blessest the righteous, and dost not reprove them for the sins that they have committed;
And Thy goodness is upon them that sin when they repent'.[1]

But St. Paul as a Jew had been too rigorous in his legalism thus to believe that God could condone wrong-doing. Evidently there were others, beside him, whose Judaism led them to be more certain of God's judgement than of His mercy. Once again, we have the closest affinity to Paul's Judaism in *4 Ezra* which, although written after his time, reflects that austere piety which Paul, as a Jew, had shared. The thought of the Age to come brings to the writer of this sombre book no satisfaction. It will 'bring delight to few, but torment unto many. For the evil heart has grown up in us, which has estranged us from God and brought us into destruction; and has made known to us the ways of death, and showed us the paths of perdition, and removed us far from life; and that not

[1] ix. 6 f. Cp. Ecclesiasticus xviii. 10–14.

a few only, but well nigh all that have been created'.[1] Yet even this writer has some hope that, in the end, God's mercy will prevail. 'We and our fathers have passed our lives in ways that bring death; but thou, because of us sinners, art called compassionate. For if thou hast a desire to compassionate us who have no works of righteousness, thou shalt be called "the gracious One". For the righteous, who have many works laid up with thee, shall out of their own deeds receive reward. But what is man that thou shouldest be wroth with him? Or what is a corruptible race that thou canst be so bitter towards it? For in truth there is none of the earth-born who has not dealt wickedly, and amongst those that exist who has not sinned. For in this, O Lord, shall thy righteousness and goodness be declared, if thou wilt compassionate them that have no wealth of good works.'[2]

For St. Paul, even this consolation was lacking. As a Jew, legalism had seemed to him the full expression of God's dealing with the race. To his uncompromising mind, legalism made impossible any trust in God's unearned favour. Did not the Scriptures say, 'Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them?'[3] 'Not the hearers of a law are just before God, but the doers'.[4] Had not Moses written, 'the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby?'[5] Paul had discovered he could not fulfil all the demands of the law, and believing that, in this, his experience was that of every Jew, he

[1] vii. 47 f. [2] viii. 31–6.
[3] Gal. iii. 10, quoting Deut. xxvii. 26. [4] Rom. ii. 13.
[5] Rom. x. 5, quoting Lev. xviii. 5. Cp. Gal. iii. 12, where the same words are quoted.

saw in the Law yet another tyrant from whose tyranny he felt the need of liberation.

II. The Tyranny of the Law

Law (*Νόμος*) is a word of many meanings, and at times St. Paul, like the other writers of the New Testament, uses it to denote any authoritative ordinance.[1] Thus he describes a woman's obligation to her husband in his lifetime as the 'law' of the husband,[2] and refers to the 'law' of the State which in no way prohibits the exercise of the Christian virtues.[3] He bids his converts fulfil the 'law' of Christ by bearing each other's burdens.[4] More often by 'law', St. Paul meant the Jewish Law, and it is with his relation to Law, in this special sense, that we are now concerned.

It seems impossible to find any simple definition in which to express St. Paul's conception of the Jewish Law. The contradictions of his thought are a reflection of the vicissitudes of his experience. For him, as for other Jews, the Law had been his boast and joy. Eagerly he had sought to fulfil all its demands and thus earn his salvation before God. But the attempt had resulted only in failure and despair. The more he tried to obey, the less he felt he had succeeded. Righteousness could never thus be gained. Through his conversion he had discovered that legalism was not the true expression of God's character and providence.

[1] 'Law' has thus a narrower significance in the New Testament than with us, for it is used only in the 'imperative' and not the 'declarative' sense. 'It is not the formula expressing a general fact, but a principle, or statute, or body of instruction, which calls for obedience'. Burton, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 447.

[2] Rom. vii. 2. [3] Gal. v. 23. [4] Gal. vi. 2.

God was a God of grace. In Christ had been revealed a new way of salvation, not earned, but freely given, to be received by faith alone. Thus for St. Paul Christ was 'the end of the Law',[1] not, as the writer to the Hebrews was later to claim, because Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law's intentions, but because He had inaugurated a new way of righteousness by faith which had abolished the legalism which misrepresented God's dealing with the race. The Law which he had found a hard taskmaster, he now knew to be a usurper, seeking to retain its power after its authority had been recalled.

Here, especially, we have to remember that we are dealing, not with the carefully defined statements of a scholastic theologian, but with the fervid utterances of a Jew of the first century, accustomed to think of the activities of God, as if, although originating with God, they were yet separate from Him, almost as distinct personalities. In the same way as Paul conceived of Sin, not abstractly, but as a demonic power, deceiving men and tyrannizing over them, so, at times, he conceived of the Law, not as a mere system of moral demands, but as a half-personal reality, divine in origin, and yet severed from God, God's harsh surrogate, whom God had permitted for the time to reign over men as a just though implacable master, who, now that Christ had come, had no longer any right to men's obedience.[2]

[1] Rom. x. 4.

[2] Such 'hypostasization' was common both in the Judaism and the Hellenism of Paul's time. In Judaism not only was God's government held to be mediated by angels, but attributes of God, such as His Wisdom, His Glory, His Spirit and His Wrath, were hypostasized, whilst in Hellenism abstract conceptions like Virtue and Fate were

In itself the Law seemed to St. Paul 'holy' and 'spiritual'[1] and he realized how great had been the advantage of the Jews in having entrusted to them 'the oracles of God'.[2] Our Lord had distinguished between the Law and the Traditions, and, rejecting or ignoring the Law's ceremonial requirements, could see in the moral Law of Judaism a preparation for the inner righteousness of God's Kingdom. When St. Paul declares, 'We establish the Law',[3] he, too, approximates to this distinction. But, in general, he assumes that the Jews and Judaizing Christians were right when they claimed for the whole Law, ceremonial as well as moral, an equal authority, and his criticism of the Law was thus, in this respect, less radical than our Lord's. Yet although he held that the Law in its entirety was divine in origin, he gained from it no help. Its commands made sinful what before had seemed innocent. Moreover, the forbidden is the attractive, and it was as he realized that the Law said, 'Thou shalt not covet', that the temptation to covet

described as personal beings. (Cp. Lucian, *Deorum Concilium*, x, quoted by Wetter, *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus*, 1912, p. 46, where the Gods of Olympus mock at these deities hatched out by the philosophers.) As Bousset puts it, speaking of Judaism, 'The "hypostases", like the angels, are intermediary beings between God and the world which make possible God's work in the world. . . . They appear as something midway between persons and abstract beings, not so much severed from God as the concrete forms of angels, more identified with His being, and belonging to Him, and yet, at the same time, thought of as separate from Him—strange bastard forms of a childish thought as yet incapable of complete abstraction'. *Die Religion des Judenthums in späthellenistischen Zeitalter* [3], p. 342.

[1] Rom. vii. 12, 14.

[2] Rom. iii. 2. Cp. ii. 22, where his early pride in the Law is expressed.

[3] Rom. iii. 31.

became too strong to be resisted. Thus the commandment of the Law was used by Sin to deceive him, and bring about his ruin. The Law was good. Yet through it Sin revived in him, and made him more its slave.[1] It was not the ceremonial Law, as such, which had oppressed him. It was the Law as a system of commands. The tyranny of the Law was for him the tyranny of legalism, that conception of God's dealing with men which demanded what could never be fulfilled—that a man should earn by obedience to the Law 'a righteousness before God'.

We have here not a historic estimate of the place and function of the Jewish Law, but the intense expression of St. Paul's own time of conflict. It is significant that the command he quotes refers not to deeds but feelings. Its prohibition increased his sense of moral impotence, and produced in him that bitter struggle between the imagination and the will, in which, unless the will be reinforced, the imagination always wins.

As a Christian, St. Paul discovered that he was no longer 'under Law'. No longer did religion mean the anxious attempt to earn salvation by obedience to prohibitions. It meant the response of faith to a God whose grace had been revealed in Jesus Christ. He knew now that 'Law' and 'legalism' were not the final expression of God's relation to the race. That relation was now revealed in Christ to be one of holy love. That discovery resolved for Paul his inner conflict. It empowered his will by captivating his imagination. His mind, henceforth, was occupied, not with prohibitions, but with the love of God Christ's Cross revealed. He felt within himself, in Dr.

[1] Rom. vii. 9 f.

Chalmers' classic phrase, 'the expulsive power of a new affection'. His was now a righteousness 'apart from the Law', a forgiveness not earned, but graciously bestowed. He could do the good he willed, not by willing, but by faith in a God of grace, and in the Son of God who had loved him, and given Himself for him.

In some Jewish writings of the period the two ways of salvation, salvation by faith, and salvation by works, were regarded as alternative or complementary. Such a compromise was impossible for one of St. Paul's temperament and history. No man could be saved by works, unless he perfectly fulfilled the dictates of the Law, and St. Paul was certain that that was as impossible for other men as it had been for himself.[1] Only in one way could a man be 'just' before God, by the way of salvation revealed in Christ, a salvation received by faith, not earned by works. This conviction, gained from his experience, this pupil of the Rabbis sought to prove from the Jewish scriptures. It was said of Abraham, that he 'believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness'.[2] At the time when Abraham's faith was thus accepted, he was uncircumcised, and ignorant of the Law. In Abraham, and in the promise made to his seed, St. Paul saw a type of the new way of salvation by faith, now revealed in Jesus Christ. As St. Paul puts it, in his Epistle to the Galatians, those who live by faith are the true sons of Abraham, and, playing on the double meaning of *διαθήκη* of 'covenant' and 'will', he claims that God's promise to Abraham was a 'testament' or 'will', which could not be abrogated, and had now been carried out in the gift to men of salvation through

[1] Rom. x. 5; iii. 20.

[2] Rom. iv. 3, quoting Gen. xv. 6.

faith.[1] In this way, he could argue 'that the Sinaitic law, instead of being, as the Jews contended, the final form of God's covenant, was no more than a lower, temporary expedient, which could not stand between the original promise of God to Abraham and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ'.[2] The Law has only transitory authority, and, whereas the Jews saw in the current belief that it had been given by angels a proof of its high dignity, St. Paul claims that the very fact that it was given by angels shows its inferiority to the promise made to Abraham by God Himself, a promise now fulfilled in Christ.[3] To us, taught to interpret the Old Testament historically, the argument is not convincing. It is the way in which this controversialist, trained in the Jewish dialectic of the time, sought to prove that legalism was not, and could not be, the full and final expression of God's dealing with the race. The Law was to him not merely a phase in the history of religion. It was the ruler, from whose hard servitude he had escaped. As such, St. Paul compares it to a 'pædagogue', a slave allowed to rule over a child, and to a guardian or steward whom we have to obey as if we were slaves, until the time comes when as heirs we enter into the liberty of sons.[4]

The Law meant bondage, and from that bondage Christ had set men free. It was because of this conviction that St. Paul attacked with fierceness those who sought to force his Gentile converts to obey the Jewish Law. Knowing himself how harsh was the Law's tyranny, he could not understand the readiness of the Galatians to submit to its demands. As pagans, they

[1] Gal. iii. 7 and 17.
[2] Moffatt, *The Approach to the New Testament*, 1921, p. 63.
[3] Gal. iii. 19 f.
[4] Gal. iii. 24 f.; iv. 1 f.

had felt themselves under the domination of Elemental Spirits which were believed to determine the fate of men. From this servitude they had been redeemed by Christ, but, if they put themselves under the Law, once again they would be in pagan bondage.[1] If this interpretation be right, then St. Paul here equates Judaism with paganism. Obviously he could not so speak if he were referring here to the Law's moral demands. By Law, he here means legalism, the system by which righteousness is to be earned by merit, not received by faith. In this sense, as he knew by his own bitter experience, the Law meant

[1] Gal. iv. 3, 9. For the meaning of the difficult phrase *τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*, which the A.V. translates 'the elements', and the R.V. 'the rudiments of the world', see Burton, *op. cit.*, pp. 510–8 and Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*, 1909, pp. 78–85, 227–30. Burton inclines to the view that the phrase means simply 'the rudimentary religious teachings possessed by the race'. Dibelius, with many other modern scholars, sees in it a reference to elemental and astral spirits. As Lietzmann puts it (*Comm. in loc.*), 'the weak and beggarly elements are (like the rulers of this age who are coming to naught of 1 Cor. ii. 6, 8) miserable demons in comparison with the one time God'. Lietzmann supposes that Paul held that Judaism itself was a worship of these elemental and astral spirits. In Enoch xviii. 13–16 and xliii. the stars are identified with angels, and from 1 Cor. xv. 40 ff. it would seem that Paul too shared this view, but there seems to be little, if any, unbiased evidence for contemporary Jewish *worship* of these astral spirits, and it seems better to interpret Paul's accusation, not as a statement of fact, but as passionate invective, like that of Phil. iii. 2, where he stigmatizes circumcision as castration, and asserts that the Judaizing circumcisors are merely pagan mutilators, or Gal. v. 12, where the meaning is apparently the same. 'I wish that these persons who make such a fuss about circumcision would get themselves castrated' (*ἀποκόψονται*), or as Lietzmann paraphrases it, 'If an operation *κατὰ σαρκά* can win salvation, I wish they would not be content with circumcision, but would get themselves castrated'. *Comm. in loc.*, *H.B.N.T.*

servitude and failure. As such, he held that like the demonic powers of paganism, it belonged to the present evil age. It was a tyrant, like the spiritual tyrants which oppress the pagan world. Elsewhere St. Paul declares that its ordinances have been cancelled on the Cross, where Christ triumphed over these elemental spirits, and thus delivered those who believe in Him from that 'evil age' to which both Judaism and paganism belonged.[1]

III. The Tyranny of Wrath

With Sin and Law, there reigned over man a still more awful power, the Wrath of God.

The phrase 'the Wrath of God' has a long history.[2] In the more primitive parts of the Old Testament, God's wrath is conceived as a passion, not unlike the anger of men. In so far as the great teaching prophets use the phrase, they ethicize it. In later Judaism, God's retributive activity receives new emphasis, and the Wrath of God denotes, not so much a feeling, as the principle of retribution. It is this usage which St. Paul adopts.

Thus in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul depicts the course of human history as a great drama in which the sin of man is followed always by the punishment of God. The Wrath of God is revealed 'against all ungodliness and un-

[1] Col. ii. 14 f. Cp. ii. 8.

[2] This section owes much to the full discussion in *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus*, by G. P. Wetter (of Upsala). As Wetter points out, the Septuagint uses two words, ὀργή and θυμός, to translate the many Hebrew words for anger. St. Paul uses both words in Rom. ii. 8. Elsewhere in the New Testament, outside the Book of Revelation, God's wrath is denoted always by ὀργή.

righteousness of men'.[1] Men might have known God. Even the Gentiles could have perceived His greatness. Instead, they turned to idolatry, and had for their sin further sin as punishment. Nor were the Jews in better case. They boasted of the Law, and yet had failed to obey it. Thus all alike were guilty before God. Over all there hung the threatenings of His Wrath. That Wrath was not yet fully operative. Its dreadful judgements would be revealed at the Last Day, which would be the Day of Wrath.[2]

Here, again, we have to avoid reading into St. Paul's words the ideas of later Western orthodoxy. He is writing as a Jew of the first century to whom it was natural to think of God's activities as half-personal powers, acting on in partial isolation from God. To him punishment was not so much the direct act of God, as the inevitable consequence of Wrath, which, although it represented the divine judgement upon sin, yet worked independently of God, much in the way that many modern men believe that 'laws of nature', though framed by God, do not express His full purposes, but act on without His direct control. Like the prophets, St. Paul, especially in his more reflective moments, saw in 'Wrath' the activity of God, and yet he could speak of 'Wrath' at other times, not so much as an expression of the Divine will, as an inexorable principle of retribution, which ruled over this present age, and which misrepresented God's gracious will for men. We have seen how St. Paul

[1] Rom. i. 18.

[2] It seems an exaggeration to say that St. Paul interprets 'Wrath' only eschatologically (so Ritschl, *Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, II, 1874, p. 140). In itself, as Wetter points out, 'Wrath' is 'a timeless conception' (*op. cit.* p. 26).

thought of Law as a personal power which, although divine in origin, was, by now, a usurper, wrongly trying to maintain an authority it had forfeited. It is in the same vivid way that he conceives of Wrath.

Wrath rules over this present age. We live in a world-order in which we reap what we have sown. There is no need for men to avenge themselves. Let them give place to the Wrath—that Wrath which leaves nothing unavenged.[1] So the civil ruler is a servant of God in that he is the agent of the personified Wrath, the law of retribution in the world.[2]

It is from the Wrath that Christ came to set us free.[3] Christians are not appointed unto Wrath, but to obtain salvation through their Lord Jesus Christ.[4] It is clear from such passages that 'Wrath' is not regarded as the true representative of God. Whilst we were sinners, Christ died for us. If that was possible, how much more certain is it that we shall be saved from the Wrath.[5] Through Christ we are delivered from our bondage to 'Wrath', which is hostile to man as God is not. Apart from Christ, all are 'children of wrath', subjects of that Wrath which rules over the world with a power from which Christ alone can set men free. Yet God had not allowed 'Wrath' to rule unchecked. The wages of sin is death. But God had stayed the full severity of Wrath, that the race be not destroyed before Christ came, who should redeem men from Wrath, and show how God deals

[1] Rom. xii. 19. It is significant that, although Paul quotes here words from the O.T. which speak of vengeance belonging to God, he bids the Christians recompense evil, not with evil, but with good.
[2] Rom. xiii. 3. Cf. Wetter, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[3] 1 Thess. i. 10. [4] 1 Thess. v. 9.
[5] Rom. v. 9.

with human sin, not by indifference, nor strict recompense, but by the Cross, in which, at last, His holy grace was fully shown, and God revealed as He is, and not as 'Law' and 'Wrath' had wrongly represented Him to be.[1]

IV. The Tyranny of the Flesh

Man's servitude to Sin not only brought him under Wrath. It made of his flesh the instrument of Sin's tyranny.

So closely does St. Paul connect flesh with sin, that some have supposed that he held the Græco-Oriental view that the flesh, as belonging to the material world, was in essence evil. In itself the theory is not improbable. The influence of the Greek estimate of flesh can be discerned in the Book of Wisdom, and is clearly visible in Philo's writings. Yet the theory seems too simple for the facts. Not only does St. Paul often use the word 'flesh' in a quite neutral sense,[2] but he can pray for his converts that their bodies, as well as their souls and spirits, may be preserved without blame at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.[3] He bids them flee from fornication, and glorify God in their bodies, because their bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit.[4] It is sometimes argued that, although St. Paul could thus speak of the sanctification of the body, he could not have spoken of the sanctifica-

[1] Cp. Rom. iii. 21–26.

[2] 2 Cor. vii. 5 ('our flesh had no relief') and x. 3 ('walking in the flesh' in contrast to 'walking according to the flesh'). Rom. i. 3 (of Christ's descent according to the flesh). Phil. i. 22 and 24 ('live in the flesh': 'abide in the flesh').

[3] 1 Thess. v. 22. Cp. Rom. xii. 1.

[4] 1 Cor. vi. 18 ff.

tion of the flesh. Not only does such a distinction seem a needless pedantry; it is incompatible with St. Paul's words, 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God'.[1]

If it seems impossible to suppose that St. Paul held the Græco-Oriental view that the flesh as matter was inherently evil, it seems equally impossible to explain his references by the Hebrew view that the flesh, as creaturely, was merely weak. The 'works of the flesh' are evil. St. Paul himself had found, and believed that all other men must find, that in the flesh 'dwelleth no good thing'. As 'carnal', 'fleshly' (*σάρκινος*), he was sold under Sin. It was because he found that his flesh obeyed Sin, and not his better self, that he had been driven to the despairing cry, 'Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?'[2] We have here, not Greek metaphysics, but the vivid transcript of St. Paul's own experience, interpreted in that half-personal way natural to a man of his temperament and period. Sin reigned over the Flesh. The Flesh had become the willing instrument of Sin's tyranny. 'The mind of the Flesh was enmity against God'.[3]

Most prominent in St. Paul's references to the 'works of the flesh' is impurity in its many forms. Prof. A. B. Bruce has suggested that it was through St. Paul's own experience 'that the flesh meant for

[1] 2 Cor. vii. 1. The genuineness of 2 Cor. vi. 14–vii. 1, is, indeed, denied by some scholars. It is possible that the passage is misplaced, but there seems no reason to doubt its genuineness, except its inconvenience to those who assert that Paul held throughout the Greek view of the flesh.

[2] Rom. vii. 7–25. [3] Rom. viii. 7.

him very specially, though not exclusively, sexual impulse'. Paul 'had his desperate struggles with the flesh under very common forms of temptation' and 'his sanctity was achieved in that fell war by one who was prepared to sacrifice an offending member that the whole body might not be cast into hell'. In itself that is not inherently improbable. As Prof. Bruce puts it, 'There is a mysterious, subtle, psychological connexion between spiritual and sensual excitements, which some of the noblest men have detected and confessed. Hence it comes to pass, paradoxical as it may seem, that most earnest and successful endeavours to walk in the Spirit, or even to fly under His buoyant inspiration, may develop by way of reaction, powerful temptations to fulfil the grossest lusts of the flesh.'[1] However that may be, there seems no evidence to show that for St. Paul the opposition of the 'flesh' took this special form. St. Paul was too strong a man to bare his soul to men's gaze, and we are here in the region of surmise. But, from his injunction in 1 Corinthians vii. 9, it seems clear that he felt that he could remain unmarried, and not 'burn', and it is more probable that Paul's frequent references to impurity are due, not to his own struggles, but to the moral weakness of his Gentile converts. His letters reveal a man tempted more to pride and bitterness than to impure thoughts. But whatever be the nature of Paul's own inner conflict, it was very real. Even when he felt within him the new spiritual forces of the Gospel, he was conscious of the opposition of his lower nature. He had to buffet his body, lest,

[1] *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, 1896, pp. 265 ff. It is possible that the command *οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις* in Rom. vii. 8 should be translated, not 'Thou shalt not covet' but 'Thou shalt not lust'.

having preached to others, he should be himself rejected.[1]

V. The Tyranny of Death

For St. Paul the Flesh was the instrument, not of Sin's tyranny alone, but of the tyranny of Death. Death ruled over the whole human race, as the cruel enemy of man.

A recent writer remarks, 'Speaking generally, indeed, of the ancient world about the Christian era, it has often appeared to me . . . that the fear of death was much more powerful and more widely diffused than it is among ourselves'. 'A New Testament writing speaks of men as being "through the fear of death all their lifetime subject to bondage".[2] The phrase is striking; one could hardly use it with regard to our contemporaries'.[3] It is clear that St. Paul shared to the full this horror of death which marked his age. Death was among the powers which tend to separate men from the love of God.[4] It was the grim tyrant, who will be the last enemy of man to be destroyed.[5] It is probable that St. Paul believed that, if Adam had not sinned, men would not have died. Yet death was more to him than dying. Christians died; and yet Christ had for them taken from Death its sting. When St. Paul realized that he himself might die before Christ's reappearance in glory, he looked forward in happy confidence to finding prepared

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [2] Heb. ii. 15.

[3] Edwyn Bevan, *Hellenism and Christianity*, 1921, pp. 81 f.

[4] Rom. viii. 38.

[5] 1 Cor. xv. 26. Only here in Paul's writings is Death clearly described as a personal foe. Elsewhere it is hard to decide whether we have metaphor or personification.

for him 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens',[1] and, when death drew near, could rejoice because, by dying, he would go 'to be with Christ, which was better far'.[2] Dying remained, but from servitude to Death Christ had set men free, though still, over all outside the Christian sphere, Death ruled as one of the tyrants which oppress this evil age.

VI. The Fall as the Source of Men's Servitude

Everywhere St. Paul assumes that, without exception, men were in slavery to Sin, and so oppressed by Wrath and Death. Alone of the New Testament writers he explains the rule of Sin and Death by Adam's fall.

It is a misuse of words to speak of 'Paul's Doctrine of the Fall', as if he had a theory of the Fall he was concerned to preach. Only incidentally—we could almost say by accident—is Adam mentioned by him at all. In the two passages in which Adam's name occurs, St. Paul is not concerned to speak of Adam. He refers to Adam only to show the greater importance to the race of Christ. It is useless to attempt to get from St. Paul's words the elaborate theories of later 'Paulinism'.

The phrase in Ephesians ii. 3 is irrelevant for our purpose. 'Children of wrath' is a Hebraism denoting those who were under Wrath. He is not thinking of hereditary sin, or racial guilt. He is reminding his Gentile converts of God's signal mercy. Before, as sinners, they were under Wrath, like other men. But God in the richness of His mercy, and the greatness of His love, had saved them by His grace, and enabled

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1. [2] Phil. i. 21.

them to share in Christ's death and the glory of His risen life.

There remain the two passages Romans v. 12–21, and 1 Corinthians xv. 22 and 45. Few passages in the New Testament have been more elaborately discussed than this passage in Romans. That is not surprising. In days when the New Testament writers were regarded as the 'amanuenses of the Holy Ghost', it was inevitable that fierce controversies should rage around the words on which alone in Scripture could be based the tremendous doctrines of 'original sin', 'universal depravity' and 'imputed guilt'. Such controversies have lost for us their meaning. They were concerned with problems which St. Paul never faced. In the more sombre Judaism of his time, the doctrine of the Fall had gained new prominence, and to Adam's first sin were assigned the miseries of the present age.[1] It is this view which Paul assumes. Here, too, his language is not that of formal definition. He speaks pictorially, more in the way of a Bunyan than of a Calvin, and conceives of Sin and Death as half-personal powers. When Adam fell, Sin gained its entry into the human race, and, when Sin entered, Death entered too, as Sin's ally, sharing in Sin's tyranny over men. Thus Death began its reign over the race, for all men, as Sin's subjects, were subject also to Death's rule. In 1 Corinthians xv. the refer-

[1] So Ecclesiasticus xxv. 24, where death is connected with Eve's sin, and Wisdom ii. 23 f., where the entry of Death is assigned to the envy of the Devil. *The Secrets of Enoch*, xli. (Resc. A), represents Enoch as seeing 'all forefathers from all time with Adam and Eva in hell'. So *4 Ezra* iii. 4–36 (quoted in part on p. 89) and lxvi. 6. The Jewish references are fully stated and discussed by Tennant, *The Fall and Original Sin*, 1903, pp. 106–247.

ence to the Fall is even slighter. Adam was only a 'living soul'. We resemble him here, until Christ, who is life-giving spirit, makes us in His image, and bestows upon us eternal life. So there is the contrast. In Adam all die; in Christ all are made alive. The life which comes to us from Adam is subject to Death; the life which comes to us from Christ is blessed and eternal.

VII. The Tyranny of Demonic Powers

Any picture of that world-view which formed the dark background of St. Paul's message of salvation would be incomplete, which did not include those spiritual beings who, as he believed, were often hostile to men, and eager for his hurt.[1]

The angels in St. Paul's thought differ much from those meek and passive agents of God's will suggested by conventional Christian art. His references to 'good' angels are few. He speaks, indeed, of the archangel who shall announce the return in glory of the Lord,[2] and of the angels who then will be the instruments of vengeance,[3] and apparently describes the ecstatic speaking with tongues as angels' speech.[4] Angels are part of the creation of the eternal Son of God, and St. Paul conceived of them as existing in different grades. There are thrones, dominions, principalities and powers.[5] As we have seen, St. Paul

[1] The passages are fully discussed by Dibelius, *Die Geisterwelt im Glauben des Paulus*.

[2] 1 Thess. iv. 16. Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 52.

[3] 2 Thess. i. 7.

[4] 1 Cor. xiii. 1. So in Gal. i. 8 and iv. 14, he suggests that an angel would be more believed or honoured than himself.

[5] Col. i. 16.

saw in the giving of the Law by angels a sign of the Law's inferiority to the promise of the Gospel made by God Himself—a clear proof that angels were not for him the mere instruments of God's will.[1] Angels thus have authority over this present evil age to which the Law belongs.[2] They are faulty as men are. Because of them, it is perilous for women to be unveiled in Church.[3] Like men, they gaze with unsympathetic wonder at the sufferings of the Apostles.[4] They are named among the enemies of men that tend to separate them from the love of God.[5] As such, Christ triumphed over them upon the Cross,[6] and, in the end, they shall be judged by those who, as believers in Christ, share in His victory.[7]

Although St. Paul thus conceived the Christian conflict to be not against mere human foes alone, but against 'principalities and powers, world rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places',[8] nowhere does he suggest that in the struggle with evil spirits he had, or desired to have, the help of 'good' angels, who were devoted to God's service. It is this that marks the difference between the piety of St. Paul and that of many later Christians who have shared in his world-view. His belief in angels and in demons was traditional and second-hand. His trust in the God whom Christ revealed was too

[1] Gal. iii. 19. Cp. J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, p. 468.
[2] Cp. Heb. ii. 5.
[3] 1 Cor. xi. 10. See later pp. 202 f. [4] 1 Cor. iv. 9.
[5] Rom. viii. 38. (Cp. note on 'elements', p. 135.)
[6] 1 Col. ii. 15. Cp. Phil. ii. 10 and Col. i. 20.
[7] 1 Cor. vi. 3. Paul here combines two Jewish beliefs, (1) the participation of the faithful in God's judgement; (2) the impending judgement of the angels.
[8] Eph. vi. 12.

intimate and living for him to desire for himself, or for his converts, angelic help. In the sphere over which Christ reigns, neither angels nor demons can destroy. Only outside that sphere could they do their malignant work.

It is here that we have the explanation of what to many Western commentators has seemed a contradiction in St. Paul's thought. In themselves, he declares, idols are nothing,[1] and yet he warns his converts that, if they share in pagan sacrifices, they will be in deadly danger.[2] To Christians, who have entered Christianity from animism, such words create no difficulty. Idols are mere dead things, yet, at their worship, demons hover round to hurt, and the Christian who goes where idolatry is, goes out of that sphere where Christ rules and protects His own, and so becomes an easy prey to the devils who are quick to seize their chance, and do him harm.[3]

Over these evil powers Satan reigns as the supreme enemy of men. He it was who destroyed the Jews who murmured in the wilderness.[4] He it was who would destroy the flesh of the incestuous person, who, as cut off from the Church, would be again in the sphere in which the Devil rules.[5] In his own 'thorn in the flesh,' St. Paul saw the work of a messenger of

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 4 and x. 19. [2] 1 Cor. x. 20 ff.

[3] So keenly is this peril realized that, e.g. in the South India United Church in Travancore, the Indian members of Church Councils would insist on the suspension from Church membership of those who attended the marriage festivals, even of relatives who were Hindus, because there idolatrous rites would be practised, and so their souls imperilled.

[4] 1 Cor. x. 10. The use of the definite article (*ὑπὸ τοῦ ὀλοθρευτοῦ*) shows that a personal antagonist is meant.

[5] 1 Cor. v. 5.

Satan sent to 'buffet' him.[1] In late Judaism, Satan is often identified with Beliar who originally was a god of the underworld and of death. And St. Paul thus describes the great antagonist of God.[2]

Especially for St. Paul is Satan the enemy of the Church's work. It was through Satan that St. Paul was prevented from visiting his converts to strengthen them in the faith.[3] He speaks of Satan as always eager to seize a chance of leading Christians astray. It is on this account that he warns the Corinthians of the peril of interrupting for long the normal relations of the marriage state: Satan will tempt them if they do.[4] The false apostles who hinder St. Paul's work are Satan's servants. When they pretend to be apostles of Christ, they are but imitating Satan, who, disguising himself as an angel of light, seduced Eve at the first.[5] When Anti-Christ appears, he will come through Satan's help.[6]

We have a convincing proof of the deep pessimism of the world-view which St. Paul had gained from

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 7. An apt description, if Paul suffered from some form of epilepsy. For the belief that diseases were due to demonic powers, cp. *The Book of Jubilees*, x. 12 ff.

[2] 2 Cor. vi. 15. So in *The Testaments of the XII Patriarchs* Satan is commonly so called. St. Paul's use of the word illustrates the close association in Jewish thought of 'death' and 'devil'.

[3] 1 Thess. ii. 18; iii. 5.

[4] 1 Cor. vii. 5. Cp. 2 Cor. ii. 11.

[5] 2 Cor. xi. 14 and 3. The myth that Satan appeared to Eve 'in the brightness of angels' is found in the Latin version of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, ix, a book which possibly originates from the first century (*Apoc. and Pseud.* II, p. 126). That the serpent seduced Eve carnally seems to be implied in *4 Macc.* xviii. 8 ('nor did the false, beguiling Serpent sully the purity of my maidenhood'), and is explicitly stated in the Talmud, *op. cit.*, II, p. 684.

[6] 2 Thess. ii. 8 f.

Judaism in his belief that Satan was 'the god of this age'.[1] In the Psalms, the hymnbook of the Jewish Church, we find the most beautiful and intense confession of a faith in a God who had regard to His people's needs, who led them, like a shepherd leading his sheep, who pitied them like a father, and comforted them with a mother's love. We may well believe that among the Jews of St. Paul's time there were many simple believers in God's gracious love, whilst some modern Jewish scholars claim that the Rabbis also thought of God as 'kindly and pitiful', loving and beloved.[2] But that is not the Judaism which St. Paul's world-view reflects. Nowhere does he speak, as did our Lord, of the God who sends rain and sun on just and unjust alike, who notices when a sparrow falls, who feeds the birds and clothes the flowers in splendour, nor had he his Master's interest in the simple sights of daily life, the women at the well, the labourers in the fields, the children playing at marriages and funerals. He saw life, apart from Christ, as those see it who are devoted to religion, but who find in religion, not joy, but a keener sense of human weakness and misery. As a Jew, his view of the world had been the sombre view of Jewish Apocalypse, which, despairing of the present, postponed to the future all hope of the experience of God's grace. As a Christian, he knew that that glorious future was already present, but he retained his Apocalyptic view that the world, while yet unredeemed, was a world separated from God and dominated by evil powers.

Even as early as the Book of Daniel, we have the division of the world's history into two epochs: the

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

[2] Cp. Montefiore, *Judaism and St. Paul*, pp. 27 and 95.

present, that of the pagan empires symbolized by the beasts; the future, that of the kingdom of the saints. It is from this belief that the Apocalyptic writers got their meagre consolation. The present age is evil, but God has determined its end, and has decreed that a new age shall come. It is this that explains St. Paul's many references to the present age or world.[1] Here, too, we note the close affinity of Paul's thought with that phase of Judaism which finds expression in *4 Ezra*. 'When Adam transgressed my statutes, then that which had been made was judged, and then the ways of the world became narrow and sorrowful and painful and full of perils coupled with great toils'. It is 'the ways of the future world' which 'are broad and safe and yield the fruit of immortality'.[2] In *4 Ezra* it is taught that the present age shall pass away at the Day of Judgement, when there shall be 'the beginning of the eternal age that is to come'. With characteristic gloom, the writer adds, 'This age the Most High has made for many, but the age to come for few.' 'Many have been created, but few shall be saved.'[3] That may well have been Paul's expectation as a Jew. As a Christian, he knew that the future age had already dawned. Only over those who had not entered into the Christian sphere did Satan and his emissaries rule. As 'the god of this world', Satan blinds the minds of the unbelieving that they might not see 'the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ'.[4] There are the rulers of this world, who crucified the Lord of glory,

[1] As Bousset points out, it is a mere accident that first in Eph. i. 21 do we have the explicit contrast of 'this age' and 'the age to come'. *Die Religion des Judenthums*[3], p. 245.

[2] *4 Ezra* vii. 12, cp. Rom. viii. 18–22.

[3] vii. 112 and viii. 1 and 3. [4] 2 Cor. iv. 4.

whose silly 'wisdom' the 'wisdom' of this world reflects.[1]

Greatly as the paganism of St. Paul's age differed from Apocalyptic Judaism, its judgement of the world was no less pessimistic. Even in the classic age of Greek thought and art, the Greek estimate of life was less naïve and cheerful than some popular essayists would have us believe. We have only to remember the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles, or the speeches in Thucydides, to realize the serious view that some Greeks took of human destiny, and of the consequences of sin and folly. But, at the beginning of the Christian era, there was an added sombreness, a loss of confidence. That age is not to be judged by the licence of Nero, or by the savage satires of Juvenal. It was an age marked by a widespread interest in philosophy, and by the growth of a new humanitarianism. But it was an age in which there was what Prof. Gilbert Murray has called 'a failure of nerve',[2] a poignant feeling of man's powerlessness, of his subjection to powers which he could not control. It is reflected in the haunting cadences of Vergil with his sense of 'tears in human things', and his longing for a Saviour who would remould this present age.[3] It is to be seen in the popular belief in astrology, which, as Prof. Murray puts it, 'fell upon the Hellenistic mind as a new disease falls upon some remote island people'.[4] It was this which secured the popularity of Oriental

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 6–8.

[2] *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, 1925, p. 155.

[3] Cp. his famous Fourth *Eclogue*. This expectation of a Saviour differed from that of Jewish Apocalypse in that it was this age or world that was to be remade.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 177.

cults with their dramatic presentation of 'redeemer-gods', and their demand that men should 'die to live'. Juvenal, in his horrible satire on women, throws scorn on the devotee who in winter-time at Isis' command bathes in the chilly Tiber, or 'goes to the extremity of Egypt' to bring water to sprinkle on her temple,[1] but such practices were an expression of that deep craving for redemption which marked that age.

In often-quoted words Swinburne complained, 'Thou hast conquered, O pale Galilean; the world has grown grey from thy breath'.[2] But his words misrepresent the facts. The world was already 'grey' when Christ was born. In the world-view which formed the dark background of his thought, St. Paul spoke, not for Jews alone, but Gentiles. What was new and strange was the creative energy of Christianity, its proclamation of a redemption which enabled men already to rejoice as those sure that for them fate was overcome, for the love of God in Christ was stronger than all the ghostly enemies of man.

B. THE NEGATIVE ASPECT OF SALVATION

Salvation means, at once, deliverance from evils, and entry into new life. In its negative aspect, salvation meant for St. Paul redemption from all the tyrannies which oppress this present age; in its positive aspect, it denoted the glad sense of filial relationship with God, communion with the risen Christ, and the possession of the Spirit's power. It is with the negative aspect of salvation that we have first to deal.

[1] *Satires*, VI, 522 ff. [2] *Hymn to Proserpine.*

I. Redemption from the Tyrannies of Law and Wrath

To St. Paul, Sin was the prime enemy of man, but the tyranny of Sin had been brought home to him through Law, and the redemption which he experienced in Christ was, in the first place, a redemption from Law's tyranny, and so freedom from Wrath. He had sought to earn salvation by fulfilling the Law's demands, but he had failed. At his conversion he learnt that God was other than he had thought, and the Gospel in which he now gloried was 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believed', a 'righteousness of God', to be, not earned, but received by faith.[1] He knew God to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—a God of holy love. No longer then could legalism be taken as the fit expression of His rule. Christians were redeemed from the tyranny of Law, and, in being freed from its tyranny, knew that they were no longer under Wrath.

'Law' and 'Wrath' are thus related, in St. Paul's thought, not to reconciliation, but to redemption. For him, as we have seen, they are not so much aspects of God's character, as partly-personified powers, which, owing to God their origin, act on in partial independence of Him, and are hostile to men, as He is not. They are among those enemies of man from which in Christ we are redeemed. They are powers from which God 'saves' us, and 'delivers' us—powers from which, by trust in God, we can 'escape'.[2] We are

[1] Rom. i. 16 f.

[2] Cp. Wetter, *op. cit.* p. 82. As Wetter points out 'Wrath' in Paul's thought requires predicates like σώζειν (Rom. v. 9, cp. Eph. ii. 6), ῥύεσθαι (1 Thess. i. 9), ἐκφεύγειν (Rom. ii. 3).

translated through Christ into a sphere over which they no longer have dominion. Christians are in Christ redeemed from Law and Wrath.

Once again we have to remember that St. Paul belonged to the first century, not to the sixteenth or seventeenth, and, if we would understand his words, we have first to rid ourselves of that interpretation of them, which assigns to the greatest opponent of legalism, a theory which makes law, not love, the supreme expression of God's character. 'Law' and 'Wrath' were not for St. Paul attributes of God with which His love had somehow to make terms. There is no suggestion in his words of a conflict within the divine character between love and justice. Law and Wrath, though divine in origin, do not adequately express God's saving will for men. Christ has now brought us into a sphere in which we may know God as He really is—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, a God of grace.

By a strange irony, it was from the Epistle in which legalism is most fiercely denounced, that the proof text was obtained to show that Christ endured the curse of the Law, as if it were the curse of God.[1] As we have seen,[2] such an interpretation is impossible. Whatever be the meaning of this obscure phrase, this at least is clear; the 'curse of the Law' in no way expressed for St. Paul God's judgement on Christ's death. He is not concerned to show that God's justice had first to be satisfied, before His love could show itself. It is not of reconciliation, but of redemption, that Paul is speaking. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law. That was the glad fact of Paul's own experience. How Christ's endurance of the

[1] Gal. iii. 13. [2] See earlier pp. 100–4.

curse of the Law has freed us from its tyranny, St. Paul does not clearly state.

In the other passage which has been brought forward as a proof of the forensic theory of the Atonement, St. Paul expressly teaches that the new way of righteousness is 'apart from the Law', in independence of it.[1] As we have seen,[2] though the form of this passage is juristic, its meaning is not. Lawcourts do not, and cannot, 'justify', or 'acquit' the guilty. St. Paul is here employing Jewish categories to answer Jewish objections, but, although he uses legal terms, his words are a denial of legalism. God is 'just and the justifier'. There was for St. Paul by now no sense of strain or contradiction in these attributes. The new way of righteousness is a way which 'counts as righteous' those who believe. St. Paul here describes in legal terms that free forgiveness, revealed in the Cross of Christ, which means the end of legalism, for it expresses God's real attitude toward men, as the Law could never do. The God who 'justifies the ungodly', is not the God of legalism. He is a God of grace, who 'commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us'.[3]

St. Paul's teaching on redemption from Law is thus less a logical deduction, than a transcript of his own experience. It is this which explains the stern vigour with which he attacked the Judaizing Christians who, by insisting on circumcision, would have brought his Gentile converts under the Law which he had found to be a tyranny. His statements about the Law lack coherence,[4] and the arguments he uses against the Judaizers seem at times forced and artificial. But it was

[1] Rom. iii. 21. [2] See earlier pp. 104–9. [3] Rom. v. 8.
[4] For Paul's attitude to the Law see earlier, pp. 129–36.

not by such arguments that he had won his freedom. He was redeemed from 'Law' and 'Wrath', when he discovered in Christ that God was a God of grace. Here again an illustration from modern missions may help to explain Paul's teaching. Thus in India the doctrine of *karma* has had in men's lives a place comparable to that which St. Paul, before his conversion, had assigned to the Jewish Law. The doctrine of *karma* stands for the principle of strict and undeviating recompense. Converts from Hinduism know themselves free from its bondage. But this is not because they have first realized the religious and logical difficulties which beset the belief in *karma*, but because they have gained from Christ a confidence in God's love too great for them to believe any longer, that recompense can be the final secret of God's providence. They feel themselves in a sphere in which they are no longer cogs in a vast machine, but children of a heavenly Father, who delivers them from the bondage of past deeds. And so with St. Paul. Certain of God's love in Christ, he knew himself to be redeemed from the tyranny of the Jewish Law.

For St. Paul Christianity meant freedom, not only from the Jewish Law, but from every legal conception of man's relationship with God. 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.'[1] 'Faith without works' would have seemed to Paul a silly phrase. Inevitably Christian faith worked out in love.[2] Christians were free, but with the freedom of those who knew themselves 'bought with a price'.[3] What need was there of law for those who live 'by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us'?[4] Those who belonged to Christ had been crucified with Him.

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 17. [2] Gal. v. 6. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [4] Gal. ii. 20.

Surely then they would show forth those fruits of the Spirit against which there is no law.[1] 'The love of Christ constrains us.' How then could liberty end in laxity or licence? For St. Paul himself, Christian freedom drove him to greater sacrifices than ever he had made in obedience to the Jewish Law. But his service now was not a nervous endeavour to earn salvation by good works. It was the spontaneous expression of the love his faith inspired, and naturally he hoped that his converts would need no law, but, through their faith, reveal that love which is 'the law of Christ'.[2]

In this St. Paul was deceived by the sincerity of his own character. The freedom of faith was one thing to those who had been brought up under the discipline of Law and the warnings of Wrath; it was another to those who had lived in pagan laxity. As we shall see, when we turn, in the next chapter, to St. Paul's care of the Churches, even this great antagonist of legalism was compelled, in dealing with his converts from paganism, to give moral commands to those too immature to enter themselves into the creative freedom of Christian faith, and to enforce these commands by stern warnings of the judgement, from which as Christians they should be free, but which would still afflict those who, by their misdeeds, denied their faith, and brought disgrace upon the Christian Church.

II. Redemption from the Tyrannies of Sin and Flesh

Closely associated in St. Paul's experience with the tyrannies of Law and Wrath, was man's subjection to Sin and Flesh. The Law, by forbidding evil, had

[1] Gal. v. 23. [2] Gal. vi. 2.

increased for him its attractiveness. He could not fulfil its demands, for he was 'carnal, sold under sin'.[1] Now all was changed. He was free, not from sin's guilt only, but from sin's power. In the new sphere into which he had entered, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and of death. This liberty he had gained, because God, 'sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh', had condemned sin in the flesh.[2] It is a mysterious saying, intelligible only as we remember that St. Paul thought of Sin in an almost personal way. Sin had got possession of human Flesh, and made of Flesh its ally. But Christ had come in flesh, like ours, in everything but this, that over His flesh Sin did not rule. Thus in His flesh, Sin had been defeated, and, by that victory, we, too, can be free from Sin's tyranny. 'Him who knew no sin', God had made 'to be sin for us'.[3] God had placed His sinless Son in this sinful life of men, and in that life He had conquered Sin, and so enabled us to share His righteousness. At His death, Christ passed from all relation to Sin's rule. His whole life is related to God alone. Because of this, we are meant to reckon ourselves 'dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus'. Sin need no longer reign in our body, for we are now, not under law, but under grace.[4]

Ideally then it would seem that Christians should be free altogether from Sin's power. If the Spirit of God were in them, then they would live not 'in the flesh, but in the Spirit'.[5] As such they would bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Yet it is clear that St. Paul was no perfectionist. Though in moments of

[1] Rom. vii. 14. [2] Rom. viii. 2 f. [3] 2 Cor. v. 21.
[4] Rom. vi. 10–14. [5] Rom. viii. 9.

triumph he could speak as if the flesh had no power over Christian men, at other times he was painfully conscious of the reality of his own inner conflict. He had to 'buffet his body', lest his life should end in moral failure.[1] He was not already made perfect. He had to 'press on toward the goal unto the prize of his high calling'.[2] Although, at times, he spoke as if his converts were completely free from Sin's tyranny, at other times he had to plead with them to become what ideally they already were. It seems unnecessary to speak of St. Paul's 'mystical paradox',[3] if by that is meant that he held a quasi-physical conception of regeneration such as later, and possibly in his time, was taught in the mystery-cults. In such cults, the devotees sought identity with their god; St. Paul sought, not identity with Christ, but vital union.

A closer parallel to St. Paul's teaching here is given us in what has been called the 'eschatological dualism' of Apocalyptic Judaism, with its rigid demarcation between this present evil age and the splendid 'age to come'. For St. Paul, that future age had already dawned. Christians shared already in its privileges and powers. Yet its consummation was not yet, and their redemption from the evils of this present age was incomplete. But although this Apocalyptic conception gave to St. Paul's teaching its form, the paradox of his experience is the permanent paradox of Christian experience. Logically there is contradiction. It is the inevitable contradiction of the eternal realized in time, of the Christian life lived amid unchristian conditions. By none is this paradox more keenly realized than by those who, like St. Paul, give themselves to

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [2] Phil. iii. 14.
[3] Cp. J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, p. 405.

the missionary work of the Church in a way impossible save for their certainty of the Gospel's adequacy and triumph, and yet are sadly conscious of their own failure to respond to the Gospel, which they proclaim as the world's one hope.

Thus few missionaries have shown a more Pauline courage than William Carey. At times he spoke with something of St. Paul's exultation: 'When I left England, my hope of India's conversion was very strong; but, amongst so many obstacles, it would die unless upheld by God. Well, I have God, and His Word is true. Though the superstitions of the heathen were a thousand times stronger than they are, and the example of the Europeans a thousand times worse: though I were deserted by all, and persecuted by all, yet my faith fixed on that sure Word would rise above all obstructions and overcome every trial. God's cause will triumph.' Or again: 'When I reflect on how God has stirred me up to the work and wrought wonders to prepare my way, I can trust His promises and be at peace.' Yet, at other times, he would lament 'I can scarcely tell whether I have the grace of God or no'. 'How shall I help India with so little godliness myself?' 'My crime is spiritual stupidity. I have no love. O God, make me a true Christian.'[1] Yet, though for long no success came, he continued his work with a confidence which neither his own sense of unworthiness, nor his apparent failure, could totally destroy.

'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' These words tell us more of St. Paul's own piety than any illustrations which can be gathered from the mystery-cults. Such words could not be used of the gods those

[1] *William Carey*[2], 1923, by S. Pearce Carey, pp. 154, 175.

cults commemorated, for they were the victims of their fate. But for St. Paul, Christ was One, who, in accordance with God's gracious purpose, by His own will had become for our sakes man, and died upon the Cross. The God who had given to the world His Son was equal to every need. Because of this, he could be hopeful even of converts such as those at Corinth. They, too, were 'saints', for they were open now to the appeal of the grace of God in Christ, and on that he based his confidence that they would reveal in the end the Christian character.[1] 'The love of Christ constrains us', and, however he might explain the redemption through Christ from the tyrannies of sin and flesh, it was this experience that he sought to create even in the least promising of his converts.

III. Redemption from the Tyranny of Death

As victors over Sin and Flesh, Christians had no longer to live in fear of Death. Death remained as the last enemy of man, and yet its sting was gone.[2] Christians might die, before the Son of God appeared, yet, at death, they now were safe from Death's power. There was prepared for them 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens'.[3] So, when in prison and very weary, St. Paul could think of dying, not with horror, but with glad expectation, for, at death, he would pass into full communion with his Lord. He would be with Christ which was better far.[4]

Sombre as was Paul's sense of the grim powers that tyrannized over the human race, he was saved from pessimism by his realization of the joy and adequacy

[1] Cp. the next chapter, pp. 188–93.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 26, 55; see earlier, p. 142.
[3] 2 Cor. v. 1. See later p. 255. [4] Phil. i. 21.

of the Christian salvation. Adam's sin had brought ruin on the race by bringing man under the tyranny of Sin and Death. But these dreadful enemies of man, though they were not dead, were doomed. If Death came through Adam's sin, life had come through Jesus Christ.[1] The grace of God in Jesus Christ had consequences wider far than the consequences of Adam's sin. Sin had 'reigned in death', now 'grace reigned through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord'.[2]

IV. Redemption from the Tyranny of Demonic Powers

We have seen how large a place in the thought of St. Paul and his contemporaries was filled by the demonic powers which were believed to rule over this present evil age.[3]

Of the reality of these dread enemies of man, St. Paul had no doubt. Christians needed to be fully armed with all the resources of the Gospel if they were 'to resist the wiles of the devil', and be successful in their wrestling 'against the principalities and powers, the world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places'.[4] Yet from this tyranny, too, Christ had brought redemption.

We have here an aspect of St. Paul's teaching which, because it is alien from our world-view, is often ignored. It is an aspect which converts in pagan lands find, not intelligible only, but essential. Raw young missionaries may, with the arrogance of inexperience, explain that there are no such things as devils, but their explanation is received with polite incredulity.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[2] Rom. v. 15, 21.
[3] See earlier, pp. 145–9.
[4] Eph. vi. 11 f.

As an Indian Christian, himself a graduate, remarked to the writer, 'You do not fear devils, and so they cannot hurt you, but we *know* that they exist'. To missionaries who have not yet gained their confidence, such Christians may describe their Christianity in terms conventional in the West, but the prime significance of Christianity is for them, not the Christian experience our Western theologies express, but this: Christ is stronger than devils, and can deliver from their power those that trust in Him. To drive out devils is part of the ordinary routine of Christian service, and even the humblest Catechist who fails in this is held to be unfitted for his work.[1] Within the sphere over which Christ rules, Christians are safe from demonic powers, but if they leave that sphere they are again in peril. It is on this account that no Christian may be present at ceremonies where there is idol-worship. Idols are nothing; but where there is idol-worship devils are active, and can destroy the Christian who has entered the sphere over which they rule. It is this, as we have seen, that St. Paul meant, when he warned the Corinthians against communion with demons. They might not drink, both

[1] When lecturing to a class of Indian evangelists and catechists on St. Mark's Gospel, on coming to a chapter in which Christ's expulsion of demons is referred to, the writer asked his students how they understood it. All spoke, as if it were the merest commonplace, of having exorcised demons. Thus one referred to a woman in his congregation who had been possessed of a devil. He and the deacons had prayer over her in the name of Christ and the devil had been expelled. Some time later she got again in the devil's power. Once more, by prayer, they exorcised it, and then, upbraiding the woman, asked her what she meant by allowing herself again to fall into the devil's power. Her answer was significant. 'For long', she said, 'I prayed to Christ every day and so was safe. But then I got careless, and did not pray and so the devil got me once again.'

of the 'cup of the Lord', and the 'cup of demons'.[1] That demons are dreadful realities all are sure. Yet there is an equal confidence that within the Christian sphere all Christians can be kept safe from their power. If Christians are harmed by demons, it is through their prayerlessness and lack of faith. Such a Christian experience may seem to many in the West crude and elementary, but it has brought an emancipation from fear which has made the uplift of these outcastes one of the most notable achievements of Christianity in modern times. True to their experience, and to St. Paul's belief, is Charles Wesley's hymn:

'On earth the usurpers reign,
Exert their baneful power;
O'er the poor fallen souls of men
They tyrannise their hour.
But shall believers fear?
But shall believers fly?
Or see the bloody Cross appear
And all their powers defy.'

'The rulers of this age are defeated.' 'The Lord is faithful who shall guard from the evil one.'[2] That to the demon-haunted world of St. Paul's time was a tremendous Gospel. No longer did men need to live in fear of astral powers which controlled their destiny. The death and resurrection of the Lord of Glory had maimed the strength of all the forces of evil. They were doomed, though not yet dead. When Christ should consummate His work they would be totally destroyed.[3] Already God has delivered 'us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love'.[4]

[1] 1 Cor. x. 19–21. See earlier, p. 147.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 6 ff.; 2 Thess. iii. 3. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 25. [4] Col. i. 13.

Thus Christ's victory over demons meant for St. Paul deliverance 'out of this present evil age'.[1] Christians were freed from bondage to the elemental spirits which rule over this present age.[2] In dying with Christ, they were delivered from their power.[3]

Strange as this world-view has become for us in the West, what is stranger is St. Paul's magnificent confidence that in Christ there is given us victory over all hostile powers. We may prefer to speak, not of 'demons', but of 'neuroses' and 'complexes'. But what matters is not the categories which St. Paul employed, but his experience that from these evils faith in Christ can give deliverance. And St. Paul's experience here is confirmed by that of modern mass-movement Christians. Much that we call acute melancholia, and hysteria, they call devil-possession, but with this difference; that, whereas with us, Christianity is generally left unrelated to these evils, with them the corporate belief in Christ's saving power does actually deliver from fear and mental tumult. We do not connect the evils of the world with demonic powers. We speak of 'heredity' and 'environment', of 'the spirit of the age'. But although our explanations of them are different, the evils that confront us have changed but little since St. Paul's time. We, too, feel within us the power of what he called the 'flesh'. We know the excitements to evil which come to us from the traditions of the past, and can see operative in the world around what he called the 'Wrath', the consequences of sin working out in distrust and hatred, and causing misery and destruction. Our explanations are doubtless truer than those of St. Paul's age, but

[1] Gal. i. 4.
[2] Gal. iv. 3, 8. See earlier, p. 135.
[3] Col. ii. 20.

that is of little help, if we cannot free ourselves from the evils which we thus explain.

Each generation conceives of the evils which afflict it in terms of its world-view. What is significant in St. Paul's teaching is not the world-view which he shared with others of his age. It is the Christian confidence that in Christ has come courage to bear every ill, and deliverance from every bondage—that, as St. Paul put it in the categories of his time, the powers of 'the age to come', the resources of the God of grace, have broken through in Christ. Such resources were not for his age alone. They are available still for Christian faith. We may describe in different terms the evils by which we feel ourselves oppressed, but we, too, are meant to find in the Christian Gospel redemption from every tyranny and terror of the soul, and be able to join in St. Paul's pæan of deliverance: 'In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded' that nothing 'can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

C. THE POSITIVE CONTENT OF SALVATION

Redemption was only the negative side of St. Paul's proclamation of salvation. It had a positive content which he expressed from three points of view. Salvation meant adoption into sonship with God, being 'in Christ', and being 'in the Spirit'.

Of these three aspects of salvation we need here speak but briefly. The nature of Christian sonship depends on the nature of God's Fatherhood, and life in Christ derives its significance from the character of

the Christ in whom we live, and to deal fully with these phases of Christian experience would be to repeat what has already been said in Chapters II and III. Again, the power of the Spirit is to be seen primarily in the Church; it will be convenient to leave till the next chapter the fuller discussion of the Fellowship of the Spirit.

I. Adoption into Sonship

Fundamental in St. Paul's own experience, and in his preaching, was the new conception of God he had gained through Christ. He had thought of God chiefly as a judge, working by the automatic principle of recompense. Now he knew that God was the Father who sought to reconcile all men unto Himself. 'All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses.'[1] It was to this message of reconciliation that he felt himself to be set apart. His work it was, as God's ambassador, to beseech men on behalf of Christ to be reconciled to God. This was the great discovery which made all things new. God's work of reconciliation was for him a creative act, comparable to that by which at the first God had created the material world. We have seen with what surprise and wonder St. Paul regarded God's reconciling work. 'While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' That is how God commends His love to men. All is of God's free grace, for it was while we were still hostile to God that He reconciled us to Himself through the death of His Son.[2]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 18 f. [2] Rom. v. 8 and 10.

To express this new status of man with God, St. Paul uses the metaphor of adoption. It is a legal term, and, as such, sounds to us to-day remote and cold. To men of his own age, it was a term familiar throughout the Gentile world.[1] If the term is legal its content excludes all legal conceptions of man's relationship to God. In the same way as St. Paul employs the legal term 'justify' to denote free forgiveness for which legalism has no place, so here he uses the legal term 'adoption' to denote reception into a life of filial trust and love.

It seems inapt to complain, as many scholars have done, that St. Paul here departs from the teaching of his Lord. Our Lord spoke, indeed, of God's 'unbroken Fatherhood', but man's sonship was broken by sin so that men had to become God's sons.[2] For Him, too, God's grace was primary, not man's natural nobility, nor even man's faith. Nowhere does He speak as if God's love were something that could be assumed without surprise. The Kingdom which He proclaimed meant 'not that we believe in God but that God manifests Himself to us; not that we call upon God with a childlike heart, but that He recognizes us as His children, and honours us with the name of sons'.[3] It was this paradox of grace that St. Paul rejoiced to preach. The Holy God is the God whom we may call with childlike confidence, Abba, Father.[4]

[1] As Feine reminds us (*Theologie des Neuen Testament*[3], p. 303), many inscriptions have the formula 'A. B. son of C. D. by adoption (*κατ' υἱοθεσίαν*) of C. D.', whilst in the mystery-cults the term was used to denote reception into mystic communion with a God.

[2] Cp. H. W. Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*[2], 1913, p. 96.

[3] Titius, *Jesu Lehre vom Reiche Gottes*, p. 104.

[4] Rom. viii. 15. Cp. Eph. iii. 12.

For those who trust Him even persecution can work out for good. The God whose sons we are is the God of peace and love and consolation.

Thus the God whom once St. Paul had thought of chiefly as a terrifying judge, had become for him the source of an imperishable joy. It is fashionable to-day to speak of St. Paul's 'Christ-mysticism'. Can we speak also of his 'God-mysticism'? If by mysticism we mean the mysticism which is uninterested in historic revelation, and has, as its highest aim, absorption into the being of God, St. Paul was not a mystic of this Neo-Platonic and Oriental type. It was communion with God, not absorption in Him, that he sought, and God for him was not the last absolute of being, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose glory has been revealed in Him. But if by mysticism we mean the immediate realization of God's presence and God's power, then we can speak of St. Paul's God-mysticism, but such mysticism is only another name for his glad realization of sonship with God through Christ. His life was 'hid in God with Christ',[1] and St. Paul believed that this vivid sense of God's fatherly love was not for him alone, but for all who believe in God through Christ.

Here, too, St. Paul had to bid his converts 'become what they already were'. Christians must be 'imitators of God as beloved children', blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish, loving their brethren as those taught of God.[2]

As sons, Christians are 'heirs'; 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ'. They are meant to be, as He was, 'conformed to the image of God's son, that

[1] Col. iii. 3.
[2] Eph. v. 1; Phil. ii. 15; 1 Thess. iv. 9.

he might be the firstborn among many brethren'.[1] Theirs is 'the inheritance of the saints in light'.[2] It was an inheritance too great to be received in full on earth. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.'[3] Yet already they are no longer aliens, but 'fellow citizens with the saints', members of the household of God, sharing in the blessings which God eternally purposed to give to men.[4]

If the consummation of our sonship lies in the future, that sonship is already real. Already we have in the possession of the Spirit the first instalment of our inheritance,[5] and so can wait with confidence for the time when 'what is mortal is swallowed up in life',[6] and we enter into the full inheritance of sonship to God, joint sonship with Christ.

II. In Christ Jesus

As we have seen, no phrase of St. Paul's is more characteristic of his piety than this phrase which apparently he coined, 'In Christ Jesus'.[7] Before his conversion his life was lived in the sphere over which there reigned, as he believed, Law, Sin, Flesh, Death and Demons. Now he had passed into a sphere in which he was free from all these tyrannies. That sphere was filled for him by the risen Christ. His life was in Christ, and all the circumstances of his life—his joys and his sorrows, his strength and his weakness, his service and his hope—were now related to this life in Christ.

For this aspect of St. Paul's experience, as we have

[1] Rom. viii. 17 and 29.
[2] Col. i. 12. Cp. Eph. i. 18.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 50.
[4] Eph. ii. 18 f.
[5] 2 Cor. v. 5; Eph. i. 14.
[6] 2 Cor. v. 4.
[7] See earlier, pp. 51 f.

seen, Judaism provides no parallel. His conception of Christ finds its nearest Jewish analogy in the expectation of the Messiah found in some of the Apocalyptic books. But, even in these Apocalypses, the Messiah is a somewhat remote and colourless figure. He is 'hidden in heaven. He is revealed only as a great mystery, and only to favoured men such as Enoch. Even after the judgement, although the righteous are to be in company with Him, there is no such account of His person as would make conceivable a living, personal communion with Him.'[1]

Nor is there a true analogy to St. Paul's conception in the pagan fancies of an immolated god. There is an immensity of difference between the cult of vegetation gods, whose death and coming to life again depict the process of the seasons, and St. Paul's faith in an actual historic Saviour who, after living on earth a life of holy love, died upon the Cross and rose again. St. Paul's self-identification with Christ's crucifixion was an act of humble and grateful self-surrender. It had little, if anything, in common with the frenzied emotion with which the devotees of Attis, Osiris or Adonis, sought to share in the lamentation of the wife or mistress of their god, or in the god's own lamentation at the sorrows he endured. In such cults the interest lay, not in the character of the god, but in the intensity of the feeling which the dramatic representation of his sufferings could create. And since these gods were the product of imagination, it mattered little how they were conceived. A worshipper might think his special god superior to that of others, but he would not claim that through his god alone could salvation be obtained and since it was always well to have as many powerful

[1] Machen, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, p. 194.

friends as possible, a man might think it wise to join in several cults.[1] To St. Paul it mattered everything who Christ was, for in Him God had been revealed and in His love and grace were to be found the norm of Christian character. There was but one Lord, as there was but one God. Christ had an exclusive place, and devotion to Him was to be shown, not in ecstasy or frenzy, but in lives inspired by His dying love and risen power. It is possible that the mystery-cults may have helped to mitigate for some of St. Paul's hearers the scandal of the Cross—though for this we have no evidence—but they cannot explain the origin of St. Paul's experience.

We can speak if we will of St. Paul's 'Christ-mysticism', but it was a mysticism which sought not identity, but communion. His mysticism was simply the vivid expression of his faith. Christ filled St. Paul's thought as the remembrance of the loved one may fill the thought of a romantic youth in the fresh fervour of first love. Yet there was an essential difference between St. Paul's faith in Christ and any relationship to Him which can be expressed in terms of human affection. Love implies equality. St. Paul's relationship to Christ was one of humble and adoring faith. For all the fervour of his devotion, it is impossible to picture him indulging in the love-dalliance of some of the medieval saints or of their modern imitators. He could not have spoken, as did St. Bernard, of the relationship of the soul to Christ

[1] Geffcken, *Der Ausgang des Griechisch-Römischen Heidentums*, 1920, pp. 16 and 253, where a reference is given to a third-century inscription (I.G. xix. 1449) which narrates how a seven-year-old boy was initiated into the mysteries of Bona Dea, Cybele, Dionysus and Hegemon.

under the figures of sensuous passion. He was the sinner. Christ was the Saviour. Christ had freed him from every tyranny, and all his relationship to Christ was determined by his remembrance of Christ's death upon the Cross.

It is needless to emphasize here the importance which St. Paul assigned in his preaching to the Cross of Christ. In it he found the answer to his quest for 'righteousness' before God, for he knew, through the Cross, that God's dealing with men is, not by 'law', but grace. This phase of St. Paul's teaching has often been misunderstood, but it has never been forgotten by the Protestant Church. Yet it is not the whole of St. Paul's teaching on Christ's saving work. It is not so much the centre of his experience as one of its two foci. His Christianity would have been incomplete without his glad sense of his share in Christ's risen life. We have seen how sombre was his view of the evils that oppress this present age—a view which had its counterpart in paganism in the belief in the oppression of fate—the determination of men's lives by astral spirits. From the presence of this evil age Christ has redeemed men. That is only the negative side of his message of salvation. Its positive content is given here, that Christians may already be 'in Christ Jesus'. The form in which St. Paul puts his teaching is Jewish and archaic. For him the resurrection of Christ was the inauguration of 'the age to come'.[1] But its meaning is a permanent element in Christianity. The full glory of the new age was

[1] We have here a difference in emphasis between Paul and Jesus. Jesus saw in His works of healing the irruption into this age of the power of the Age to come (Matt. xii. 28; Luke xi. 20). Paul dated the presence of that New Age only from the Resurrection.

not yet revealed, but already he saw the glory of its dawn. His life on earth was a life 'in Christ Jesus'. He lived in time as in the eternal, but the eternal was not for him the unknown. Its content was given him in Jesus Christ. It is a phase of St. Paul's teaching which has been strangely neglected in the Western Church—a neglect which has cramped our message, when, as in India to-day, we have to preach Christianity to those who, like many in Paul's age, are conscious of their bondage to the seen and the temporal, and feel already a home-sickness for the eternal, which no message concerned only with the things of time can satisfy.[1]

The mystic way is often solitary, and some modern scholars speak as if the experience St. Paul expressed by the phrase 'in Christ Jesus' was peculiar to his 'mystic' temperament. That was not St. Paul's view. He assumed that this life in Christ was for all believing men, and not merely for those endowed with special spiritual receptivity. It is clear that others learnt his language, and shared in part his experience. Thus we find the amanuensis of his Epistle to the Romans—a man who by his name seems to have been a slave—saluting its readers 'in the Lord'.[2] Christians were meant not only to be redeemed from the tyrannies which oppress this present age, but to live already in the sphere whose meaning was given them in Christ.

The doctrine of the 'two ages' which gave to St. Paul's teaching here its form was more intelligible to his contemporaries than it is to us. But his meaning

[1] Cp. J. Kaftan's Essay, *Die Paulinische Predigt vom Kreuz Jesu Christi* (*Zur Dogmatik*, 1904, pp. 255–337).

[2] Rom. xvi. 22.

is not dependent on this Jewish phraseology. We live in the world of time and space, subject to the limitations of heredity and environment, enmeshed in conditions which often seem to contradict our Christian faith. Yet we, too, are meant to live in time as for the eternal, to find the eternal already present. The Gospel of the Cross, without the Risen Life, would be a Gospel inadequate and incomplete. The Gospel which St. Paul preached was, like the message of his Lord, a Gospel which spoke, not of forgiveness only, but of deliverance from bondage to the seen and temporal. That deliverance on earth is always incomplete. To be with Christ would be better far.[1] But even in this life, we may look, not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen, knowing that the things which are seen are transitory, the things which are unseen are eternal.[2] The meaning of the eternal sphere is given us in the Christ who died and rose again.

III. The Possession of the Spirit

From another aspect St. Paul described our participation in the life of 'the age to come' as the possession of the Spirit.

Here he spoke the common language of early Christian piety. After the resurrection the first disciples had waited for the promise of the Father of which they had heard from Jesus,[3] and in the strange uprush of new power at Pentecost they saw the work

[1] Phil. i. 23. [2] 2 Cor. iv. 18.

[3] Acts i. 4. The recurrence of the word 'promise' (*ἐπαγγελία*) confirms the statement of the Fourth Gospel (John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13) that our Lord when on earth had promised the Spirit. Cp. Acts ii. 33; Gal iii. 14; Eph. i. 13.

of the Spirit whom the risen Lord had now given to the Church.

Even in Judæa this new enthusiasm was not without its perils. In all revivals, abnormal phenomena, such as ecstatic utterances, attract more notice than quiet transformation of character. With St. Paul's converts from paganism the preaching of the Spirit might easily have led to wild fanaticism. It must have been a strange Church meeting at Corinth, at which a Christian, in his excited utterance, could call Christ 'accursed', and yet believe that he was speaking under the Spirit's inspiration.[1] For all his copious resources of thought and language, St. Paul, too, spoke 'with tongues', and, even in his private prayers, found at times that his longing after God was too intense to be expressed by articulate speech, whilst his joy at God's adoption of him caused him to cry out in the Spirit, 'Abba, Father'.[2] He had no desire that his converts should suppress their ecstatic emotion. He bade them not 'to quench the Spirit'.[3] But when, at Corinth, reliance on the Spirit led to licence and excess, he realized at once the peril, and warned them that if, in speaking with a tongue, they contradicted the central Christian confession that Jesus is Lord, then they were inspired, not by the Spirit of God, but by demons such as those which as idolaters they had served.[4]

Like other Christians of his age, St. Paul was concerned, less with the explanation, than with the experience of the Spirit. He was too conscious of the Spirit's power to feel perplexed about the nature of the Spirit. It is possible that, at times, he spoke of

[1] Cor. xii. 3. [2] Rom. viii. 23 and 15. [3] 1 Thess. v. 19.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 2 f.

the Spirit realistically, as if the Spirit were not so much personal as physical.[1] Even if that be so, the supreme significance of his teaching here lies, not in such occasional retention of sub-Christian ideas, but in his close association of the Spirit with Christ, and in his conception of the Spirit as the source of illumination and of Christian character.

In every phase of the Christian life St. Paul saw the manifestation of the Spirit. That life may equally well be described as a life of faith, or as life in the Spirit, for faith is the response on man's side to the Spirit's work. It is through the Spirit that we have access to the Father; it is as we are led by the Spirit that we are sons of God.[2] Our bodies are meant to be temples of the Holy Spirit.[3] It is in the Spirit of our God as well as in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are justified and sanctified.[4] It is through the Spirit's power that believers may abound in hope.[5] To sow to the Spirit is to reap life eternal.[6] Already in the possession of the Spirit we have the first instalment of our full inheritance.[7] Not only does the Spirit enable us to receive the Christian salvation; by the Spirit we are enabled to understand the revelation which has come to us in Christ. 'Enthusiasm', it has been well said, 'in itself is revolu-

[1] Thus in Rom. v. 5 (cp. Acts ii.) he speaks of 'pouring out the Spirit' and in 1 Cor. xii. 13 speaks as if the baptized were baptized not only in the water, but in the Spirit. It is possible that we have here the influence of Stoic teaching. More probably St. Paul is not really reflecting that quasi-materialistic view, but is speaking metaphorically. Feine aptly quotes Isa. xxix. 10; Ps. lx. 3; Jer. ix. 15 (*Theologie des Neuen Testaments*[3], p. 343).

[2] Eph. ii. 18 and Rom. viii. 14.

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 19. [4] 1 Cor. vi. 11. [5] Rom. xv. 13.

[6] Gal. vi. 8. [7] Eph. i. 14. Cp. 2 Cor. i. 22.

tionary, but this enthusiasm was fettered to something definite and given'.[1] The Spirit does not bring new revelations, but, instead, makes explicit the revelation already given in Christ. The Spirit is a creative force, bringing to the Church rich resources of guidance and of power, but the highest knowledge the Spirit can give us is thus that 'we have the mind of Christ'.[2] 'Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty',[3] but the liberty is not unchartered; for the revelation which the Spirit gives is a revelation implicit in Christ. And because of the close association of the Spirit with Christ, the liberty of the Spirit is the liberty, not of licence, but of love. The supreme gift of the Spirit is not ecstatic utterances, nor even gifts of eloquence and organization. It is the gift which does most to upbuild the Church, the gift of love, and that love St. Paul describes in words which obviously owe everything to what he had learnt of the character of Jesus.[4] The liberty of the Spirit is not 'doing as we please'. It is the liberty, not only to admire, but to will and to do what is well-pleasing unto God.[5]

We have here a striking proof of the radical change in the religion of this former Pharisee. For the development of the Christian life, St. Paul relies, not on a law, but on the possession of the Spirit. To live in the Spirit meant not obedience to a set of rules, but faith working out in love, a new principle of life, which produced, not the fruit of the flesh, but the fruit of

[1] R. Seeberg, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* [3], I, 1920, p. 81.
[2] 1 Cor. ii. 16. [3] 2 Cor. iii. 17. [4] 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7.
[5] J. Weiss aptly quotes the Stoic definition of freedom given by Cicero, *parad.* 34. What is liberty? The power of living as you will (*potestas vivendi, ut velis*). *Urchristentum*, p. 433.

the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control.[1]

So closely does St. Paul connect life in the Spirit with life in Christ that some have held that he identifies the Spirit with the Risen Christ. This seems an exaggeration. On closer examination, we find that some of the passages in which that identity is believed to be asserted have no reference to the Holy Spirit.[2] Even in 2 Corinthians iii. 17, the much-contested words 'Now the Lord is the Spirit' do not seem to teach formal identity. As Dr. E. F. Scott points out, 'his words must be understood in connexion with the passage as a whole, which deals, not with the nature of Christ, but with the nature of the two covenants. The first was given by Moses, who imposed the "letter", the written Law; the second was the covenant in Christ, who gave the living Spirit. "The Lord is the Spirit" may thus be regarded as a condensed way of saying "The Lord represents the new rule of the Spirit".'[3]

Although the Spirit and the Risen Christ are thus not identified by St. Paul, yet they are most intimately associated. To be 'in the Spirit', and to be 'in Christ' denote possession of the same privileges and character.[4]

[1] Gal. v. 22.

[2] E.g. Rom. i. 3, where the 'spirit of holiness' is not the Holy Spirit, but our Lord's own spirit of holiness, and 1 Cor. xv. 45, where the words 'life-giving Spirit' denote not the identification of Christ with the Spirit but the nature of Christ's vivifying work.

[3] *The Spirit in the New Testament*, 1923, p. 181. As Dr. Scott points out, the words in the next verse *ἀπὸ Κυρίου Πνεύματος*, can more naturally be translated not, 'from the Lord, the Spirit', but 'from the Spirit of the Lord'.

[4] Deissmann points out that of the nineteen times in which Paul uses the phrase in the Spirit (*ἔν τῷ πνεύματι* or *ἐν πνεύματι*), in

Without this association with Christ, the belief in the Spirit would have led some to fanaticism, and others to a vague religiosity, without moral meaning or power. The preaching of Christ, without the experience of the Spirit, would have made Christianity traditional and legal, concerned with the past, and not with the present.[1] Both these dangers were overcome in St. Paul's preaching. The Spirit was the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of the Lord. Adoption into sonship with God, life in Christ, and life in the Spirit were not three separate experiences. They were three aspects of the one Christian experience.

Thus in St. Paul's proclamation of salvation, its negative aspect of redemption from the evils of this present age has its positive counterpart in the participation of the life of the 'age to come', the glad sense of God's fatherly love, communion with the Risen Lord, and the possession of the Spirit which was, at once, the first instalment and the pledge[2] of the ultimate fulfilment of that salvation which we may already in part experience, and which eternity will consummate. Faith has but one object, God, who is revealed to us as the Father, through the Son and in the Spirit.

IV. Father, Son and Spirit

We have here no formal doctrine of the Trinity. That could arise only when the Church was compelled

fifteen cases it is used in connexion with the same fundamental conceptions as the formula 'In Christ'. *Die neutestamentliche Formel 'in Christo Jesu'*, p. 85.

[1] Cp. Winkler, *Das Geistproblem*, 1926, p. 28.

[2] 2 Cor. i. 22; v. 5; Eph. i. 14; *ἀρραβών* is the first instalment, the deposit paid as a pledge that the whole sum will later be paid.

to explore the relation of the preincarnate and ascended Son to the eternal Father, and as we saw, when dealing with the doctrine of Christ's person, of such problems St. Paul's Epistles do not speak. Yet it seems clear that, to use the terminology of later thought, St. Paul's monotheism was of a trinitarian type. The one God was, not so much conceived, as experienced in a threefold way.

It seems useless to attempt to find parallels to St. Paul's teaching here in the triads of paganism. 'Three' is one of the commonest modes of reckoning, and there are some relationships, like those of father, mother and child, which must always be threefold. There is no trace in St. Paul's thought of the mythological conception of a Divine Family such as is to be found in the contemporary recognition of Osiris, Isis and Horus, or in much of the popular Christianity of later times. Nor had St. Paul to bring into unity three separate Gods.[1] There was for him but one 'God, the Father of whom are all things and we unto him'; and the 'one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him'[2] was in no sense a rival God. Yet, although no analogy is to be found to St. Paul's thought in pagan triads, the Christian conception of the triune God stands in close relation to the general aspiration of religion. As one of the greatest of modern students of religion has pointed out, religion has inevitably the threefold conception of a God or supernatural power, of a reality which confronts us in the world, and of a divinely influenced and so sacred kind of relationship which stands in

[1] As the *Trimurti*, the so-called Hindu Trinity, brings together the worship of Brahmā, Vishnu and Siva.

[2] 1 Cor. viii. 6.

contrast to the everyday life of the world.[1] It is these three postulates of religion which the Christian conception of God perfectly expresses. 'Of Him, through Him, unto Him'[2]—these words of St. Paul serve to show, in part, the meaning of his threefold experience of God. In themselves the words are capable of a pantheistic interpretation, and were thus congenial to the Græco-Oriental mysticism of his time.[3] But St. Paul's words speak, not of the pantheistic absolute of being, but of the living, personal God, revealed through Christ, in whose Spirit we live. We know God the Father through the Son, and we know Him, not through a past revelation only, but through the present possession of the Spirit. The Christian message of salvation has for its positive content, 'the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit'.

[1] Cp. Archbishop Söderblom, *Vater, Sohn und Geist*, 1909, p. 37.

[2] Rom. xi. 36.

[3] Reitzenstein (*Poimandres*, p. 39) describes these words (*ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν τὰ πάντα*) as 'the fundamental formula of the Egyptian-Greek mysticism' of the Hermetic literature. If, with W. Scott (*Hermetica*, I, p. 10), we hold that this literature is later than the first century A.D. it is impossible to suppose, as Reitzenstein does, that Paul derived this formula from it.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AS THE HOME OF SALVATION

I. The Christian Fellowship

THE Church had its beginning when the little band of those who had followed Jesus discovered that God had raised Him from the dead, and thus had put His seal on all that He had taught and been. The discovery brought to the disciples an amazed enthusiasm which caused them to continue 'stedfastly in prayer', waiting for that manifestation of Divine power which they associated with the promise of the Spirit.[1] At Pentecost that power was realized, and the community of believers 'continued stedfastly in the teaching of the Apostles, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers'.[2] Such is the account which Acts gives us of the formation of the Church, and of its distinctive features. The Church possessed the new message of salvation which the Apostles taught. It was a Fellowship, and this Fellowship found expression in a common meal and a common worship.

It is this conception of the Church which St. Paul received, and which he developed through the peculiar vividness of his devotion to Christ, and through his

[1] Acts i. 14, 4. [2] Acts ii. 42.

experience as the apostle to the Gentiles. The Church was the home of salvation. Outside its fellowship there still ruled the tyrannies which oppress this evil age. Within, there were experienced the redeeming power of Christ and the positive content of the Christian Gospel—adoption into Sonship with God, life in Christ Jesus, and that possession of the Spirit which was the first instalment of the glory of that new age which should at length be fully known by all whom Christ had saved.

More clearly than the other Apostles St. Paul realized the radical novelty of Christianity. Christianity was not a transformed Judaism; it was a religion for the world. Within the Fellowship all natural differences of race or sex or status were transcended. In Christ 'there can be neither Jew nor Greek', 'bond nor free', 'male nor female': all are 'one in Christ Jesus'.[1] Nor were even the most degraded excluded. Christianity was not for 'the respectable classes' alone. Among its converts were some who had been addicted to the vilest vices.[2]

We have here an aspect of Christianity which was strange to both the Judaism and the paganism of that time. As a Pharisee, St. Paul would have despised the wrongdoer; as a Christian, he seeks to bring him into the Christian fellowship. A modern Jewish scholar has remarked how alien from current Judaism was this quest for the lost. 'The summons not to wait till they meet you in your sheltered and ordered path, but to go forth and seek out and redeem the sinner and the fallen, the passion to heal and bring back to God the wretched and the outcast—all this I do not find in Rabbinism; *that* form of love seems

[1] Gal. iii. 28. [2] 1 Cor. vi. 9 ff.

missing.'[1] Christianity was not, indeed, alone in its assumption that men were brothers. Stoicism also was cosmopolitan in its outlook. Thus Seneca, St. Paul's great contemporary, declares that 'Virtue is barred to none: she is open to all, she receives all, she invites all, gentlefolk, freedmen, slaves, kings, exiles alike'.[2] But even in Seneca the Stoic recognition of human brotherhood was primarily intellectual. It consisted in the readiness to admit the intellectual possibilities which exist even in barbarous peoples.[3] It lacked the impulse of active love. The Fellowship of which St. Paul spoke was not for the wise alone. It was open to every man, for, for every man, however foolish or ignorant, Christ had died.

This new conception of Fellowship differed from Stoic cosmopolitanism, not only in its comprehensiveness, but in its exclusiveness. Philosophical monism finds little difficulty in polytheistic practice. The intellectual aristocrat does not complain of the idolatry of the ignorant, nor is he himself inclined to risk comfort and safety by refusing to join in popular cults. But for the early Christians such tolerance was impossible. There was but one God, one Lord, one Spirit. Thus the comprehensiveness of Christianity had for its correlate a refusal to compromise with pagan worship.

We have only to remember the weakness of the early Church, to realize the audacity of the claims

[1] C. G. Montefiore, *The Spirit of Judaism* (*The Beginnings of Christianity*, I, p. 79).

[2] *de Benef*, iii. 18, quoted by Lightfoot, *St. Paul and Seneca. The Epistle to the Philippians*, 1900 edit., p. 307.

[3] Cf. Wendland, *Die Hellenistisch-Römische Kultur in ihrer Beziehungen zu Judentum und Christentum*, p. 232.

which St. Paul made for the Christian Fellowship. The very word Church, *ecclesia*, in itself suggested the confidence of the Christians that they were now not only the disciples of Jesus, but 'His *people*, the people of God' and as such 'the true Israel, at once the new people and the old'.[1] Christians were a third people. The world for them was now divided into Jews and Gentiles and the Church of God.[2] They were God's Israel.[3] By rejecting the Messiah, the Jews had cut themselves off from their ancient heritage, so that the Christians now had taken their place as heirs of the promises of God.

The Church was thus more than an assemblage of Christians. It had an ideal significance. Its members form the temple of the living God.[4] They are, as it were, a building which has Christ for its foundation.[5] In this new Israel of God, the old distinction between Jew and Gentile had vanished. Christ had broken down the middle wall of partition which kept the Gentiles from coming near to the Holy Place.[6] His death had inaugurated a new Society, world-wide in its scope, its mission and its meaning. That

[1] Cp. Harnack, *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, E.T.[2], 1908, I, p. 240.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 32.

[3] Gal. vi. 16. To say that the Christians were the *Ecclesia* was to say this in another form. In the Septuagint *Ecclesia* is predominantly used to translate *Qahal*, the assembly of Israel.

[4] 2 Cor. vi. 16. [5] 1 Cor. iii. 11.

[6] Eph. ii. 14. The reference is apparently to the wall which prevented Gentiles from passing from the Court of the Gentiles to the Courts of the Women and of the Sons of Israel which were in proximity to the Holy Place. When the site of the temple was excavated in 1871 there was found on one of the pillars of this low wall an inscription forbidding any Gentile to enter further under pain of death.

Society was meant to be the Body of Christ [1] on earth, whose members, drawing their nourishment from Christ the Head, should so grow up together that at last the Church should be fit to show in its corporate life the greatness of the Son of God.[2] Such was the ideal, and St. Paul had as his hardest task the attempt so to influence his converts that the actual might more nearly resemble the ideal.

II. St. Paul and his Converts

On his converts this lonely, childless man lavished his eager love. Many a modern missionary fails because the Christians among whom he works feel that he is ready to give, but not to receive; that he cares for his work but not for them; that his service is inspired, not by affection, but by duty. But St. Paul had the first and greatest equipment for missionary service, a love, based on Christ's love, which could impel him to seek his converts' good with a hope which no disappointment could quite destroy. We have only to turn to what is the simplest and probably the earliest of his extant Epistles, 1 Thessalonians, to realize how much he identified his happiness with his converts' progress. Not only did he exhort them as a father,[3] he had been gentle with them like a mother with her unweaned child.[4] When he was away from them, he felt like one bereaved, and longed to see their face.[5] The news that they were stedfast in the Lord

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 12; Rom. xii. 4 f.

[2] Eph. iv. 13–6.

[3] 1 Thess. ii. 11.

[4] 1 Thess. ii. 7; if instead of gentle (*ἤπιοι*) we read, with many ancient MSS., *νήπιοι* 'babes', then Paul claims that he had been as a babe among babes, using baby-language like one who nurses her own child.

[5] 1 Thess. ii. 17.

brought him, as it were, a fresh lease of life.[1] They were his hope, his joy and crown.[2] In his prayers he gives thanks to God for their 'work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope'.[3] Even when he was writing to the Galatian Church at a time of great anxiety and disappointment, he gratefully remembers the personal kindness of its members. They did not mock at him in his weakness. They would have torn out their eyes to do him service.[4] In the least satisfactory of his Churches he could discover some grounds for praise. He could not congratulate the Corinthians on their Christian character. Instead, he praises them for the gifts of eloquence and knowledge which some of their members possessed.[5] Many of his converts may not have understood his dialectic, but such love as this is everywhere intelligible.

Ignorant and degraded as were many of St. Paul's converts, he yet speaks as if to all alike were open the infinite resources of the Gospel. They were God's children, they were in Christ Jesus, theirs was the Holy Spirit. Even to the Corinthians he could speak as if all its members could discern for themselves spiritual truth. As spiritual men, they could judge all things, and know for themselves what was 'the mind of Christ'.[6] St. Paul had his disappointments. As we have seen, it was not easy for one of his upbringing and temperament to realize how readily the liberty of grace could be misused by those who had not first known the discipline of 'Law'.[7] He had been a Jew, taught from childhood to think of God as holy and righteous, and to tremble before the 'Wrath'

[1] 1 Thess. iii. 8. [2] 1 Thess. ii. 19. [3] 1 Thess. i. 3.
[4] Gal. iv. 12–6. [5] 1 Cor. i. 5 ff. [6] 1 Cor. ii. 16.
[7] See earlier, pp. 156 f.

which those incurred who transgressed any of God's just commands. He learnt to reject the legal view of God, and to think of God, not primarily as the Judge, but as the Father. Henceforth he had himself no need of 'Law'. The love of Christ constrained him, whilst the Spirit gave him insight into the meaning of God's revelation in Christ Jesus. We have only to turn to his Epistles to the Corinthians to see how little his experience was reproduced in many of his converts. Some of them were slaves. Such naturally accepted gladly his proclamation of spiritual freedom. They liked to think themselves the children of God, but, because they had not shared in St. Paul's Jewish awe of God, they could not rightly use his Christian teaching of God's love, and, for some of them, liberty degenerated into licence.

It was this that brought to St. Paul the greatest sorrow of his missionary life. The writer well remembers a remark made to him by a senior colleague when first he reached the mission-field. 'You will find that your troubles come first from your colleagues, and next from the Christian community. You will have some from non-Christians too, but these will hurt so little in comparison that they will scarcely count.' Cynical as the remark sounded, it was certainly true of St. Paul's experience. His relationships with the leaders of the Church were often far from cordial. Like many a pioneer missionary since, he worked better with juniors than with his equals, and from the 'pillars' of the Church at Jerusalem he received little more than a cold tolerance which stung him at times to angry speech.[1] Although he suffered much from Jews and pagans, it was 'the care of the Churches'

[1] Gal. ii. 6, 9.

which hurt him more.[1] He could not understand the vacillations of his converts, and found it hard to make allowance for their pagan upbringing. St. Paul would not take back his assertion of Christian liberty, but he had to learn, by bitter experience, how unfit were many of his converts for the liberty which he proclaimed.

A modern missionary, finding his motives misunderstood, and his character impugned by those whom he has sought to serve, is tempted to hide his disappointment under a cold reserve. That was not St. Paul's way. He let his converts see how much they had pained him. Their conduct had led him both to tears and anger. They had accused him of lying, shown him such little trust that he had to take precautions lest he should be accused of embezzling the collection money. They had mocked at his lack of eloquence, sneered at him for writing boldly from a distance, whilst, when he was with them, his speech was faltering and unimpressive.[2] Such experiences are the commonplaces of missionary work; but it is clear how greatly St. Paul was hurt by them. With bitter irony he congratulates the Corinthians on already sharing in the blessings of the Messianic Kingdom, whilst he and the other apostles were like gladiators in the arena whose torments and death would amuse a pleasure-sated crowd. The Corinthians were wise and strong; the Apostles were fools for Christ's sake, and scorned, as if they were the offscouring of the world. Yet even here his irony soon gives way to words of yearning love. They were his beloved children, he had begotten them in the Gospel, and that is why he would admonish them.[3] Although the insults he

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 28. [2] Cp. 2 Cor. i. 17; ix. 20 f.; x. 10. [3] 1 Cor. iv. 7–16.

received from his converts could drive him to anger, they could not alienate his affection. If he wrote to them in bitterness of spirit, he did so, not that they might be grieved, but that they might realize his love.[1] Angry he might be, but never scornful, nor indifferent. He wrote to his converts, not with the cold propriety men show to strangers who have offended them, but with the anger they show only to those they love. These converts were his children, and even of these men he could 'boast'.

It may well be that St. Paul's immediate success would have been greater if he had been ready to legalize Christianity by drawing up a code of commandments for his converts. 'The natural man', as Sohm said, 'is a born Catholic',[2] and immature Christians can more easily conceive of Christianity as a doctrine to be learnt, and as a law to be obeyed, than as a creative experience of forgiveness, communion and moral renewal. We have only to turn to the so-called Apostolic Fathers to realize how little permanent influence St. Paul had here. It is probable that popular Christianity had not changed greatly by that time, and that the violent contrast which we feel between the Christianity of St. Paul and that, say, of the *Shepherd* of Hermas is really the contrast which existed from the first between the Christianity of St. Paul and that of many of his converts. Here and there were those who did indeed 'learn his high language', and reproduce, in part, his experience. Thus we find Tertius, who, from his name, was probably a slave, the amanuensis of Paul's letter to

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 4. St. Paul here apparently refers to a lost letter, unless, as some think, that letter is given in 2 Cor. x.–xiii.

[2] *Outlines of Church History*, E.T., 1895, p. 35.

the Romans, sending his own salutation 'in the Lord'.[1] But it may well be doubted if there were many who really understood St. Paul's conception of Christianity as based, not on 'law', but on a faith which shows itself inevitably in love.

Some elements in St. Paul's preaching would have been readily understood by his Gentile converts. They had felt themselves in bondage to demonic powers and fate, and redemption from them they would gladly have received. But it was hard for them to share with St. Paul the mingled awe and intimacy with which he thought of God as Father. They were ready to receive new commandments. Some of the Galatians were even prepared to undergo the Jewish rite of circumcision. For converts from paganism, too, it was easier far to try to obey a law than to accept a Gospel. Pride dies hard, and the humble self-committal of Christian faith cannot, at first, be easily understood.

Although St. Paul realized the problem, he refused to compile a code of regulations, and continued to rely on the recreative power of Christian faith. Instead of taking the easy course of issuing orders, he sought to get his converts to act as men who remembered the great facts of Christian experience. They had been bought with a price; let their liberty be then that of those who knew they were not their own but Christ's.[2] They were God's children; then they must live 'blameless and harmless', 'without blemish', 'holding forth the word of life'.[3] They had been redeemed by Christ's death and resurrection; they must share in them, dying to sin, rising to newness of life.[4] They had a

[1] Rom. xvi. 22.
[2] 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[3] Phil. ii. 15.
[4] Rom. vi. 4–14.

share in the Spirit's power; then they must cease to live to the flesh and do its works; instead, they must live to the Spirit and bring forth the Spirit's 'fruit' of love.[1]

It is significant that the great classic utterances of St. Paul's Christian faith are all given, not as theological propositions, but as incentives to Christian lives. He uses, without sense of bathos, the sublimest truths to enforce quite humdrum lessons. Thus when he would stimulate the Corinthians to give generously to the poor of Jerusalem, he does not say, 'You must give such and such a proportion of your income'; he reminds them of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who, though He was rich, yet for their sakes had become poor.[2] Or there was bickering in a Church. St. Paul does not seek to check it by the commonplaces of Ethics. He bids them think as Christ thought, who grasped not at His equality with God, but emptied Himself and became obedient even to the death of the Cross.[3] Thus for St. Paul there was no need of 'Law'. With Luther he might have said, 'Faith asks not whether good works are to be done, but before the question is asked, it has already done them, and is always doing them'.[4] To one of his sincerity, it was enough to contemplate the great Christian truths in order to act out in life their implicates.

Such teaching could be effective only with those of some spiritual maturity. St. Paul found that some of his converts were but 'babes in Christ'. He could not speak to them as if they were 'spiritual'. They had, instead, to be 'fed with milk'.[5] So the great

[1] Gal. v. 16–24. [2] 2 Cor. viii. 9. [3] Phil. ii. 5 ff.
[4] Quoted by Heiler, *Das Gebet* [4], 1921, p. 581.
[5] 1 Cor. iii. 1 f.

opponent of legalism was compelled against his will to become a casuist, and give to his converts directions on moral problems, which would have been superfluous if they had been mature enough to win from Christian truth guidance in Christian morals.

III. St. Paul's Missionary Casuistry

It is here that St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians is of supreme importance. In it we see St. Paul resolutely refusing to compile a Christian moral code, and yet compelled to guide his converts in regard to problems of conduct which they were as yet too immature to solve. The subjects about which he had to write are such as still perplex missionaries working in undeveloped Christian communities: disputes before non-Christian courts, sexual irregularities, questions concerning marriage and the place of women in the Church, and problems connected with the social status of Christians belonging to oppressed classes.

(i) *Litigation.*

That Christians at Corinth should have carried their disputes with fellow-Christians before courts the officials of which were pagan, naturally aroused St. Paul's strong indignation. Such conduct was an affront to the Christian Fellowship.[1] The argument he uses is one which has lost for us its meaning. We do not think of the 'saints' as 'judges of the world' and of 'angels'. But behind the archaic argument lies

[1] As W. L. Knox points out, this was opposed not only to Christian sentiment, but to all Jewish ideas. Paul himself had submitted to punishments from Jewish courts and in Acts xxviii. 19 even feels that he must apologise to the Jews at Rome for his appeal to Caesar. *St. Paul and the Church at Jerusalem*, 1925, pp. 312 and 322.

the thought of the glory of the Christian Gospel. Men who have received its blessings should be able to manage their own affairs, and in every Christian congregation should be found some 'wise man', able to decide disputes among 'brethren'. If none such could be found, it was better to endure wrong from fellow-Christians rather than to bring the Christian Fellowship into public disgrace.[1] Here, too, modern missionaries have found the necessity of St. Paul's advice. Thus in some of the great mass-movement Churches of India it was found necessary, for the honour of the Christian name, and in order to check the litigiousness of their members, not only to constitute Church courts, but to forbid any Christian, under pain of excommunication, to bring a suit before the public court, until the Church had first investigated the case, and granted permission—a permission which was rarely given. And tedious as the work often is, many a missionary has found it worth while to spend long hours with trusted representatives of the Church in judging of disputes between Christians, and, in that way, not only to settle such disputes, but to help to form Christian standards of morality. St. Paul had no time for such work, and little interest in organization, and, unfortunately, we do not know in what way his advice to the Corinthians was carried out.

(ii) *Sex-problems.*

With converts from paganism, no sin is commoner than that of impurity, and no problems are harder to solve than those connected with sex and marriage. To St. Paul, trained in the strict purity of a devout Jewish home, the moral laxity of some of his Gentile converts

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 1–7.

was evidently a frequent source of anxiety and sorrow. Adultery was condemned by pagans as the violation of another man's property, but fornication was very lightly regarded. There were indeed some exceptions. Thus Musonius the Stoic condemned not only adultery and sodomy, but the 'giving way to shameful pleasures, and rejoicing like pigs in impurity'.[1] Yet even Seneca, St. Paul's great Stoic contemporary, spoke as if fornication was natural and blameless in a young, unmarried man.[2] It is not surprising that St. Paul had repeatedly to warn his converts against fornication. Thus St. Paul has to remind the Thessalonians that God's will for them of sanctification carries with it the obligation 'to abstain from fornication'. Each man must live with his own wife in chastity and honour, knowing that God will punish those who infringe on others' rights.[3]

So lightly was fornication regarded at Corinth, that some of Paul's converts there seem to have regarded it as natural and lawful as eating and drinking. St. Paul adduces two arguments against this view, both of which sound strange to modern ears. Eating and drinking affect our flesh and blood. They do not affect the body which God will raise up. Fornication concerns the body, and, as such, is not a matter of

[1] In his *Concerning Sexual Pleasures* (*περὶ ἀφροδισίων*), quoted by J. Weiss, *Der Erste Korinthierbrief*[2], 1925, p. 168.

[2] E.g. *Controv*, II, 12, 10, where defending a young man accused of dissolute habits, he writes, 'He has not sinned; he loves a prostitute; that is usual; he is young, he will amend his faults and marry a wife'. Quoted by Hunkin, *J.T.S.*, April, 1926, p. 282.

[3] 1 Thess. iv. 3–6, interpreting 'vessel' (*σκεῦος*) as 'wife'—a vulgar usage for which there are Rabbinic parallels. Offensive as is to us this use of the word, in its context this interpretation seems more probable than that which takes 'vessel' to refer to a man's own body.

indifference. It is another way of saying that impurity is not of the flesh only, it affects a man's personality as food and drink do not. We should have expected St. Paul to give some general principle which would condemn fornication as in itself contrary to that Christian law of love which will not permit anything which involves another's degradation. Instead, St. Paul proceeds with an argument which was only relevant for Christians. Christians were members of Christ. How then could they make the 'members of Christ', 'members of a harlot'? St. Paul seems here hardly to have worked out the implicates of his thought. His argument could be used against the continuance of relationships with a pagan partner. Yet elsewhere St. Paul advises that such marriages should not be wilfully dissolved. Inadequate as St. Paul's treatment seems, it is extraordinarily characteristic of his religious concentration. He was not concerned to establish moral principles of universal application. His concern was with the character of his Christian converts, and, to this man, to whom Christ meant everything, the impurity of Christians was first and foremost the contamination of the members of Christ's body. Christians were not their own. They were bought with a price. Let them therefore glorify God in their body.[1]

At Corinth so great had been the moral laxity in the Christian Fellowship that an incestuous relationship had been condoned which was abhorrent even to pagan sentiment.[2] So little was the Church there organized that it had no means ready to deal with

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 12–20.

[2] 1 Cor. v. 1–5. Marriage with a stepmother was condemned by Roman as well as by Jewish law.

this conspicuous scandal. St. Paul urged the members to meet together, and, in solemn assembly, cut the offender off from their fellowship. It is hard to say what St. Paul meant when he spoke of the incestuous person being 'delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the body'. Some have taken the words to mean that St. Paul expected that the man would die, as Acts records that Ananias and Sapphira died before St. Peter's rebuke. That seems improbable, for, in that case, there could be no word of 'the man's spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus'. Once again, we have to remember the almost spatial way in which St. Paul, like many a convert in India to-day, contrasted this evil age with the sphere of the Christian redemption, in which the powers of the 'age to come' were partly realized. The Christian Fellowship must be purified by the man's expulsion. Cut off from the Christian sphere, he would be again in the sphere where ruled Satan, the God of this world, the enemy of man, and he would now have none to protect him from Satan's malice, and thus his body might be destroyed. Yet St. Paul still hoped that the man's spirit would be saved. How that could be, he does not tell us. It would seem that he hoped that bodily suffering would make him renounce his sin, and, in penitence, seek readmission to the Church, in which salvation reigned.

With the moral laxity at Corinth there went ascetic tendencies. Some eschewed marriage; others, though married, abandoned normal marriage relationships. And St. Paul's advice was sought. That advice St. Paul could not refuse to give, but he gives it with evident reluctance, and as one whose mind was not yet clear on the questions raised.

For St. Paul, marriage seems to have had no attraction. He much preferred the unmarried state in which he could serve his Lord with a freedom impossible for those bound by the ties of family, and he would have liked other Christians also to enjoy his freedom. But he knew that his own personal preference did not give him the right to demand from his converts abstinence from marriage. If they were married, let them take care not to refrain for long from normal marriage relationships, lest, through their attempt at continence, they should be led by Satan into impurity. If they were unmarried or widowed, his own feeling was that it was better for them to remain as they were; if they felt they could not, then let them marry. Only in regard to one question does St. Paul speak with definiteness. The Lord had forbidden divorce, and, because of His command, Christians might not sever themselves even from pagan partners. Besides, there was always the hope that the unbelieving partner might become converted.[1]

St. Paul passes on to the question of 'virgins', concerning which his advice had evidently been specially asked. Our Authorized and Revised Versions, by supplying the word 'daughter',[2] makes the problem merely this, Should a Christian father seek a husband for his unmarried daughter? But it is possible that St. Paul is here discussing, not this simple problem, but the more subtle problem connected with 'spiritual marriages'. We know that in the second and third centuries it was not uncommon for a Christian man to live with a Christian virgin, in a relationship like that of brother and sister, and many scholars hold that it is to such relationships that

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 1–24. [2] In verses 36, 37, 38.

St. Paul is here referring. If so his advice is this: 'If a man can so live with his virgin let him do so; if he cannot, let them marry, for they can do so without sin.' Such an interpretation removes some of the difficulties in the translation of this difficult passage.[1] But against it there is one grave objection. It is hard to believe that St. Paul, who knew how readily his converts could fall into fornication,[2] would have tolerated this bravado of asceticism with its grave moral perils.

Little as St. Paul prized the marriage state, there seems no reason to ascribe to him the morbid interest in virginity which marked many Christians of the second century. He is careful to state that his advice to the unmarried to remain as they were was a private preference, and not a command which must be obeyed. That advice was based, not on the Græco-Oriental dualism of matter and spirit, but on the expectations he had derived from Judaism of the great tribulation which would precede the coming in glory of the Messiah and the end of the present age. It was because of the 'impending distress'.[3] When he wrote

[1] So Bousset (*S.N.T.*), Lietzmann (*H.B.N.T.*), J. Weiss, *Comm. in loc.* and, with some hesitation, Lake (*The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*[3], pp. 184–91). With this interpretation, in v. 36, *ὑπέρακμος*—a very rare word—is to be translated 'passionate', 'if he be passionate' (instead of 'if *she* be past the flower of her age'); *ὁ γαμίζων* of v. 38 will then be translated 'he that marrieth' (instead of 'he that giveth in marriage')—a translation which Lietzmann seeks to justify. In this way, the parallelism of these verses is preserved. Such spiritual marriages seem to be implied in the *Shepherd* of Hermas, III, ix. 11, with its curious mixture of asceticism, eroticism and piety. They are referred to with aversion by Irenæus, Tertullian and Cyprian, and had later to be forbidden by Church councils.

[2] Cp. his advice on marital relationships in *vv.* 3–6. [3] *V.* 26.

this Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul believed that his generation would be the last. Marriage thus lost its meaning, for, before children could reach maturity, the end would come, and their presence would be an added anxiety during the terrible world catastrophe which, as he believed, would precede that end. We have here a conspicuous difference between St. Paul's outlook and that of most modern missionaries. St. Paul shows here no appreciation of the contribution which the Christian home can make to the Christian Church. In a modern mass-movement, with converts as crude and unstable as some of those at Corinth, the hope lies, less in the present, than in the future. Their children will profit by the parents' partial faith, for they will be brought up within the sphere of Christianity, and have the opportunities which come from Christian teaching and training. Thus, as experience shows, from even the most ignorant and degraded peoples, in two or three generations, a Christian community can be formed, which will show almost incredible progress in Christian character and insight. Such expectations lie far beyond St. Paul's thought and experience. This present age would soon be over. It was better not to be needlessly entangled in its affairs.

(iii) *Women's Place in the Church.*

In an early Epistle, St. Paul had proclaimed that in Christ differences of race, sex and status had lost their significance. In Him there was 'neither Jew nor Greek', 'bond nor free', 'male nor female'. The unity of the Christian fellowship broke down all divisions. All were one 'in Christ Jesus'.[1]

[1] Gal. iii. 28.

This message of emancipation was not without its immediate perils. At Corinth some of the women came to Church services, and took part in their proceedings unveiled. This St. Paul condemned.[1] He had been brought up in Tarsus, an Oriental city, where women were in public completely veiled, and he argues the question, not from fundamental Christian principles, but from his prejudices. As Sir W. Ramsay, writing before the recent emancipation of women in the Near East, remarked, 'In Oriental lands the veil is the power and the honour and the dignity of the woman. With a veil on her head she can go anywhere in security and profound respect. . . . But, without the veil, the woman is a thing of nought whom anyone may insult. A woman's authority and dignity vanish along with the all-covering veil that she discards'.[2] And although Corinth was a Greek city, a woman who appeared in public with unveiled head could readily have been taken for a prostitute. The prejudices of the time thus afforded good reason for St. Paul's prohibition. But St. Paul was not content to decide the question on practical grounds. He adds some dubious arguments. It is 'because of the angels' that women need to be veiled in the assemblies of the Church. We have lost the clue to this cryptic phrase. Once again we have to remember that, for St. Paul and his contemporaries, the earth was filled with innumerable spirits. It is possible that by the 'angels', St. Paul meant messengers of God who, present at the service, would report to God any misbehaviour. It is more probable that he has in mind the curious narrative of Genesis vi. 1–3, which was understood to mean that angels, who were in-

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 2–16. [2] *The Cities of St. Paul*, p. 204 f.

continent, had taken to themselves women, and thus begotten a race of lawless giants.[1] If so, St. Paul's meaning would seem to be that the woman who speaks in public unveiled runs the risk of falling into the power of evil spirits.[2] St. Paul adds a second argument. It is a disgrace to a man to have his hair long. 'If a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering,' and thus nature itself teaches that she ought to be veiled in public prayer. Such arguments were as unimportant for Paul as they are unconvincing to us. His real argument is custom. 'We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God.'

Unconvincing as are the arguments St. Paul uses, any who know the East will appreciate the wisdom of his conservatism.[3] The Christian message was revolutionary in its abolition of all spiritual privileges. Such a message could easily lend the appearance of anarchy. St. Paul's Corinthian converts would not, in any case, have impressed favourably their pagan neighbours. For the Christian women there deliberately to have offended the prejudices of their age and place would have brought fresh scandal on the Christian name. Without care and caution, Christian liberty in a pagan land can look like common licence.

[1] This is the interpretation of Enoch vi. and vii. and of the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, lvi. 10 ff.

[2] Dibelius' suggestion that the veil was held like an amulet to have magic power to ward off evil spirits, seems insufficiently supported.

[3] Not many years ago, in the great Christian community in Malabar founded by the Basel Mission, there was bitter strife ending in protracted lawsuits because the wife of one of the missionaries discarded her topee in Church, whilst a highly-educated Indian Christian once wrote to the present writer letters of passionate and, as we would say, of scurrilous abuse, because a lady who was his guest for a Convention persisted in going hatless to the Church where it was held.

In the passage we have been studying, St. Paul does not forbid women to pray or prophesy in public. He demands only that, when they do so, they shall be veiled. Elsewhere in this Epistle it is stated that 'women shall keep silence in the Churches'. 'If they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the Church.' [1] These two verses are in clear contradiction to the early passage, and, in the judgement of many scholars, are not the words of St. Paul.[2] Outside the Pastoral Epistles,[3] there is nowhere else any suggestion in the writings ascribed to St. Paul that he forbade women to speak in the assemblies of the Church. The prohibition seems rather to belong to an age already infected by the more cautious ecclesiasticism which marks the Pastoral Epistles, and this conclusion is supported by the dislocation of these two verses in some ancient texts.[4]

However that may be, when we remember St.

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 34 f.

[2] Bousset, *S.N.T.*, and J. Weiss, *Comm. in loc.*

[3] 1 Tim. ii. 11 f.

[4] Harnack remarks that 'the only way of removing the contradiction between these two passages is to suppose that in the former Paul is referring to prayers and prophecies of the ecstatic state, over which no one could exercise any control, while the speech which is forbidden in the second passage denotes public instruction'. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, E.T.², II, p. 65. But the latter passage occurs in connexion with speaking in tongues, and, if genuine, may equally well be taken to mean that it was ecstatic and uncontrolled speech that St. Paul forbade women to indulge in in public. The possibility of inconsistency on such a topic cannot be excluded in a letter, not carefully revised, but dictated to an amanuensis. In D.G. and some cursives, *vv.* 34 and 35 follow *v.* 40, and this seems to show, as J. Weiss puts it, that 'in the Western tradition there were some texts in which these verses were missing'.

Paul's age and place, what is surprising is not his conservatism in regard to women, but the large place which women evidently had in the ancient Church. It is hard to conceive of St. Paul the Apostle as a married man. All his interest was engaged in the spread of Christianity and in his care of his converts, and his restless activity left no room in his life for the responsibilities of wife and children. But, if he wrote harshly of women at Corinth who were imperilling the good name of the Christian fellowship, it is clear that there were women in the Church whom he highly honoured. Thus in the greetings he gives to his friends in the last chapter of Romans, many are to women. There is Phœbe, who had helped him and many others; Prisca, who with Aquila her husband, had been his 'fellow-worker in Christ Jesus' and had imperilled her life for his sake. There is Mary, who had laboured much for the Christians at Rome, Tryphæna and Tryphosa, and Persis, an active Church worker and, at the same time, beloved. There are Julia and the sister of Nereus. It is absurd to describe a man who thus wrote of women as a misogynist. If he bade wives obey their husbands, he bade husbands to love their wives, and not be bitter against them.[1] If he spoke of the husband as the head of the wife, it was as Christ was the head of the Church; and Christian husbands were therefore to love their wives, even as Christ had loved the Church, and given Himself up for it.[2] By such words, St. Paul has done more for womanhood through the centuries than he would have done by countenancing an untimely liberty which would have robbed Christian women of their fair repute. Religiously men and women were equal.

[1] Col. iii. 18 f. [2] Eph. v. 22–5.

'In Christ Jesus there was neither male nor female.' It did not belong to St. Paul's age to work out the social implicates of this religious estimate.

(iv) *Slavery.*

Closely parallel to St. Paul's treatment of the problems connected with sex and marriage is his treatment of the problem of slavery.

In Christ slave and free were one, but the end of this age was near, and secular distinctions were thus of slight importance. If a convert was a slave, he need not distress himself because of his status. Even if he had the chance of freedom, it was not worth while to utilize it. Slave he might be of man, but he was the freedman of Christ. There was no essential difference between him and the man free-born. For the convert that was free was the slave of Christ. All Christians alike had been bought with a price. Let them then preserve their religious liberty. The real slavery was not that of social status. It was the slavery of those still in inner bondage to men's opinions.[1] As St. Paul conceived it, the task of the Church was not to transform the customs of the world. For that there was no time, for this world-order had almost reached its end. It was enough if Christians called as many as possible to share their fellowship, and, within that fellowship, revealed a love which made unimportant distinctions of social status. Slaves must be faithful to their master, as those that feared the Lord and knew that He would give them their recompense. Masters must treat their slaves justly and

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 21–4. In the context it seems impossible to take the 'use it rather' of *v.* 21 to mean 'if you have the chance of becoming a free man, utilize it'.

fairly as those who knew that they themselves had a master in heaven. With God there was no respect of persons. The Divine estimate of men depends on character, not on status.[1]

How little social distinctions mattered to St. Paul is seen in his exquisite little letter to Philemon. Philemon's slave, Onesimus, like the typical slave of Roman comedy, had robbed his master, and then fled to Rome, where came the refuse of the world. There he had somehow met St. Paul, was converted to Christianity, and thus became Paul's 'child', 'begotten in his bonds'. St. Paul would gladly have kept him with him. Instead, he sent him back to Philemon, claiming for him that he was now, indeed, what his name denoted, 'Profitable', and begs Philemon to receive him, not as a slave, but as a 'brother beloved'. St. Paul does not ask for Onesimus' emancipation from slavery. He does expect that Philemon will treat his slave, not with vindictiveness, but as a fellow-Christian who had won Paul's love, and for whom Paul pleads that he should be treated with the kindness Philemon would have shown to Paul himself, to whom he owed his knowledge of the Gospel. Stoicism had learned a new kindness, and Seneca could speak of slaves as 'humble friends'.[2] But here in St. Paul's letter we have more than pity for the unfortunate; we have a love which could receive, as well as give, and which saw in a slave a friend, and could commend him to Philemon his master, and to the whole Church at Colossæ, as a 'faithful and beloved brother'.[3]

Looking back over the centuries, it is easy to see how greatly Christianity gained through the limitation of its horizon. The message of Christian freedom

[1] Col. iii. 21–iv. 1. [2] Ep. xlvii. 1. [3] Col. iv. 9.

could easily have led to a slave revolt which would have been suppressed by the state with ruthless cruelty. Christians were in an insignificant minority. They could not have transformed the customs of the world, and, believing that the world was swiftly coming to an end, they had the more immediate task of showing that even in un-Christian relationships the Christian life could still be lived. It is unjust to blame St. Paul for the condonation of slavery by the Church in later times when the Church had the power to secure its abolition. St. Paul was not concerned with the moral judgements of the pagan world. It was his task to guide little Christian communities living in the midst of a pagan society. He laid down the unity of all believing men in Christ. He brought even to the slave the sense of spiritual freedom. He sought to establish a Christian fellowship which could transcend all distinctions of social status, and in which the slave, like the free-born, could be honoured as a fellow-member of Christ's body. It was the duty of later ages to destroy slavery as an infringement of the personal worth of those for whom Christ died. And it is still part of the Christian task to strive for a social order which shall more worthily express the Christian estimate of man. Such an endeavour lay beyond the possibilities of St. Paul's age. His expectation of Christ's speedy return enabled him, instead, to concentrate on the one task within his reach—the establishment of a Church in which Christian love should rule.

(v) *Food offered to Idols.*

A small Christian community in a pagan world has speedily to face the problem of the relation of its

members to the paganism with which it is surrounded. Thus at Corinth there was difference of opinion as to the legitimacy of Christians eating food which had been offered to idols. Trivial as the problem may seem to us, it was one of great practical difficulty. The provision market [1] was often situated in the neighbourhood of a temple. Not unnaturally some of the Christians felt that it was perilous to eat food which, as consecrated to idols, brought those who partook of it into relation with pagan gods. Thus they were unwilling to eat with pagans, lest such food should be set before them. Others, less timorous, argued that as idols were nothing, there was no objection to eating food which might have been offered to them. With these St. Paul agreed. Elsewhere in the Epistle he did indeed warn the Christians not to attend pagan sacrificial feasts, for to do so was to enter the sphere where demons were and thus to share in such feasts was to have communion with demons.[2] But, in themselves, idols were nothing, and food offered to them could be safely eaten. Thus when dining with pagan friends, there was no need for Christians first to inquire whether the food before them had been bought at a stall, where it would have been consecrated to a pagan god. But, although knowledge was good, love was better. Those who had freed themselves from needless fears must bear in mind the perplexities of the weak who could not eat such food, without remembering that it had been offered to idols. For them, such food did have the

[1] Called in 1 Cor. x. 25 by the Latin word *macellum*. Thus at Pompeii the meat stalls adjoined the Chapel of the Caesar-cult. Cp. the diagram given by Lietzmann. *Comm. in loc.*[2], *H.B.N.T.*, p. 53.

[2] 1 Cor. x. 20 ff. See earlier, pp. 147, 163 f.

effect of bringing them back into relation with the gods, and so was perilous. So the strong must give no 'occasion of stumbling' to their brethren. Knowledge inflates, but love builds up. Love, not knowledge, must determine what each man should do. The scruples of the weak were without justification, and yet the strong must yield to them, if the good of the Christian fellowship required it.[1]

(vi) *Speaking with 'Tongues'.*

It is this same principle of the common good of the Christian Church that St. Paul uses as a guide to the problems of public worship. The enthusiasm which marked the first preaching of Christianity found expression in ecstatic and inarticulate utterance. A modern missionary will often discourage emotional revivals, knowing how little excitement contributes to the building up of Christian character, and finding, by bitter experience, how easily among immature Christians any relaxation of self-control is followed by immorality. It is significant that it was at Corinth, where the conduct of some of the Christians had brought disgrace upon the Christian name, that the speaking with tongues was most prized and practised. St. Paul did not seek to check such emotional utterances. He too could 'speak with tongues more than them all', and he would not have the speaking with tongues forbidden.[2] Yet he warned the Corinthians of the perils of this ecstatic speech. Ecstasy was no proof of truth. If a man in his rapt emotion confessed

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 1–13; x. 23–33. Cp. Rom. xiv. 1–8, where scruples connected with vegetarianism and the observance of special days are similarly dealt with.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 18, 39.

Jesus is Lord then he was speaking in the Holy Spirit; if, instead, he declared 'Jesus is accursed', then he was inspired not by the Holy Spirit but by demons such as he served in the days of his idolatry.[1]

Even when 'speaking with a tongue' was due to the gift of the Holy Spirit, it was not for St. Paul the Spirit's highest gift. The ecstatic experiences which led to this unrestrained speech were the privilege of the few. They brought to them a rare and indescribable joy, but such unintelligible speech did not help the Christian congregation. St. Paul bade the Corinthians remember the needs of the Christian fellowship, that body of Christ of which they all were members. Let them then seek the gifts which were less conspicuous, and yet were greater than the gift of ecstatic utterance, and, above all, those gifts which alone had eternal meaning, faith and hope and love, and especially love, the greatest of all the gifts of the Spirit.[2]

In this way St. Paul, though sharing with his converts an appreciation of the gift of ecstatic utterance, was able to save Christianity from its imminent peril of becoming in the pagan world an orgiastic cult. The Corinthians were proud of their frenzied emotion, and saw in it the distinctive proof of the Spirit's power. Instead, he bade them seek most of all the Christian character, the reproduction of the love that Jesus showed. If they would seek special gifts, then

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 1 ff. Paul unfortunately does not explain the phrase 'Jesus is accursed'. Was the man who said this quoting in his frenzy remembered words of Jewish polemic (cp. Gal. iii. 13) or was he one so 'spiritual' that he had no use for the historic Jesus? See earlier, pp. 104 and 176 f.

[2] 1 Cor. xii., xiii.

let them seek to prophesy. Prophecy, intelligible preaching, was more profitable to the Church than unintelligible expressions of emotion. Even if they spoke with a tongue, let them pray that they might be able to interpret intelligibly the sounds they uttered. For himself, he would rather speak five words which could instruct the Church than ten thousand that were unintelligible to it. Besides, the Corinthian Christians ought to remember the needs of strangers who might attend their assemblies. If all the Christians present spoke with tongues, strangers would naturally think that they were mad, whilst if they heard intelligible preaching, they might be led through it to worship God. So St. Paul advised that not more than two or three should 'speak with a tongue' at any session, and then not together, but in turn, and to do so only if there was someone present who could interpret the meaning of their ecstatic speech. In this way, everything might be done decently, and in order.[1]

Thus the worship of the Christian Church, as St. Paul conceived it, was spontaneous and free. Yet he would not have liberty degenerate into licence. Liberty had but one limit—the limit, not of law, but of that love, which seeks not reputation nor pre-eminence, but the building up of the Church, and the conversion of those as yet unacquainted with the Christian salvation.

IV. Church Organization

As of worship, so of organization. God had given to the Church a rich variety of gifts. Some were to serve the Church as apostles, some as prophets, some

[1] 1 Cor. xiv.

as teachers, some as workers of miracles, some as healers. There were those who could help, and those who could govern.[1] There were those who spoke in various ways with tongues. Every gift was given by God, and was to be used for the good of the Christian fellowship. Greater than all these gifts was the gift of love.[2]

The discovery of the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* has shown that in the early stage of Church life that ancient book reflects, apostles and prophets were itinerant ministers, whilst 'bishops and deacons' were ministers of the local Church by which they were appointed.[3] By some, the 'apostles, prophets and teachers' whom St. Paul names first as set in the Church by God are regarded as a special 'charismatic' ministry whose authority was recognized throughout all the Churches as due to a special 'grace-gift' of God, whilst such officers as 'presbyter-bishops' and deacons, lacking that special 'grace-gift', had authority only in their local Church.[4] Such a description seems a misrepresentation of the facts. For St. Paul, every gift was a *charisma*, a 'grace-gift' of God. He that gives, or he that rules, or he that shows mercy is as much exercising a 'charismatic' ministry as the apostle, the prophet or the teacher.[5] The distinction lies not in

[1] Or, as Lindsay happily puts it, those who have the right 'of subordinate service', and those who have the gift of 'oversight'. *The Church and the Ministry in the Early Centuries* [2], 1903, p. 149.

[2] 1 Cor. xii. 28–31. Cp. Eph. iv. 11 ff.

[3] See chapters xi–xiii, and xv. This book was first published in 1883.

[4] So, especially, Harnack, e.g. *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, E.T. [2], I, pp. 326–46.

[5] Rom. xii. 6 ff. As Dr. Armitage Robinson puts it, for St. Paul, 'every function of the Body, any power whatever of helping the whole

the nature of the gift, but in the sphere of service. 'Apostles, prophets and teachers' were, as Dr. Headlam puts it, 'missionary', whilst those who had as their task administration were 'local ministers'.[1]

In formal organization St. Paul showed little interest. Naturally the apostles had the greatest influence in the early Church. But St. Paul does not restrict the term to the Eleven or the Twelve. He himself was an apostle. So was Barnabas; so apparently some others.[2] St. Paul would not allow even the apostles at Jerusalem to interfere with the Churches he had founded. He himself advised his Churches and pleaded with them, but he was careful to affirm that he claimed no 'lordship' over their faith; he sought only to be 'a helper of their joy'.[3] His authority was that of a missionary in the pioneer stage of missionary work. Such authority may be opposed by discontented Christians, but with loyal converts it is very great. It is the authority of one who stands to his converts as a 'father to the children he has begotten'.[4] But this authority is ultimately one, not of office, but of personal influence. Thus St. Paul did not himself cut off from the Corinthian Church its incestuous

is a "charisma", a manifestation of that grace with which the Body is endowed'. *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry* [2], 1921, p. 73.

[1] *The Doctrine of the Church and Reunion* [2], 1920, p. 61.

[2] Only once (in 1 Cor. xv. 5) does Paul speak of the 'Twelve'. In 1 Cor. ix. 4 ff. Barnabas and Paul are apostles 'like the rest of the apostles'. So, too, Acts xiv. 4 and 14. In Rom. xvi. 7 Andronicus and Junias are 'among the apostles'. In Gal. ii. 16 Paul speaks almost contemptuously of the so-called pillars of the Church. 'It makes no difference to me what their status used to be—God pays no regard to the externals of men' (M.).

[3] 2 Cor. i. 24. [4] 1 Cor. iv. 15.

member. Instead, he asks that its members should assemble together so that his judgement on the case should be brought before them as if he himself were present with them to urge the course of action he would have them take. The solemn decision to excommunicate the offender was to be the act not of St. Paul, nor of the local officials of the Church, but of the whole assembly of its members.[1]

Of the organization of the local churches we know little. The Book of Acts tells us that on his first missionary journey St. Paul appointed elders ('presbyters') in all the Churches he had founded, and in the Epistle to the Philippians we find him addressing himself to the 'overseers' ('bishops') and deacons. Such 'elders' or 'overseers' seem to have been leading members of the local Churches, but there is no suggestion that theirs was a whole-time office. It is possible that St. Paul is referring to them when he urges the Thessalonians to 'hold in honour those that are over them in the Lord, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake'. But it is clear that the 'cure of souls' was not their exclusive care. All Christians were meant 'to exhort each other, and to build each other up'.[2] Those who had as their special 'grace-gift' the management of affairs, or the superintendence of finances, might be entrusted with such work by the local Church,[3] or by St. Paul himself, but every Christian was expected to give to the Christian Fellowship whatever gift he had received from God.

St. Paul's Epistles thus reflect a stage of Church life when organization was prized only in so far as it was required for the effective proclamation of the Gospel

[1] 1 Cor. v. 3 ff. [2] 1 Thess. v. 11 ff. [3] 2 Cor. viii. 19.

and the building up of the Christian Fellowship. The unity of the Church was strongly realized, but for that unity St. Paul relied not on uniformity of organization, but on the common possession of the Spirit manifested in a love which made each seek the good of all.

V. The Sacraments

The unity of believers with Christ and so with each other found expression in the two great sacraments of the primitive Church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Around these ancient symbols of the Church's unity has gathered so many an acrimonious controversy that it is with diffidence and reluctance that we pass to the consideration of St. Paul's teaching here. As we turn to St. Paul's actual references in his Epistles from the vast literature devoted to the discussion of them it is difficult to avoid a sense of disproportion. The Lord's Supper is referred to in only one of his Epistles, and then only because of abuses which required correction, whilst to Baptism he refers some six or seven times.[1]

(i) *Baptism.*

Whatever be the origin of Christian Baptism, it seems clear that even before the time of St. Paul's conversion it was already one of the common rites of the Christian Church. As such St. Paul refers to it as one of the unifying possessions of all Christian men. There was one Baptism, as there was one body, one

[1] According as we regard Eph. v. 26 to refer to Baptism. In the Pastoral Epistles, which are here, as elsewhere, excluded from our survey, Baptism is probably referred to in Titus iii. 5.

Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith and one God and Father of us all.[1] Nowhere in St. Paul's writings is there any suggestion that he contemplated the possibility of men being Christians in isolation from the Church. Faith in Christ meant not only communion with Christ, it meant incorporation into His Body, which is the Church, and of that incorporation Baptism was the solemn symbol.

In a missionary Church, Baptism has decisive importance. Before Baptism, a man may think of becoming a Christian, but his allegiance is as yet uncertain. At Baptism, the convert breaks with his old life, leaves the sphere over which, as he believed, there ruled the gods and demons he had loved, and feared, and enters the sphere over which Christ reigns and in which He can protect His own. Thus in a Church situated in a pagan world, Baptism is not merely a symbol. It is an act which marks a definite stage in the convert's life. As such, St. Paul's vivid mind saw in Baptism the apt picture of the Christian's break with the old life, and his share in the risen life of Christ, and, in the most characteristic of his references to Baptism, he uses the immersion of the convert at Baptism to show that 'the believer must have a grave in his history. Self must be mortified even to the finality of burial, that so from the tomb of the dead self, he may rise into newness of life'.[2] Baptism is thus the symbol of incorporation into Christ. It denotes the Christian's death to sin, and the beginning of a life so different from the old that the transition may be compared to Christ's resurrection from the

[1] Eph. iv. 4 ff. Cp. 1 Cor. xii. 13. 'Ye were all baptized into one body'.

[2] G. O. Griffith, *St. Paul's Life of Christ*, 1925, p. 152.

dead. It would be contrary to St. Paul's general position to suppose that Baptism could of itself effect this new and transforming experience. Its importance lay in this: that it marked the final breach with the old life so that the believer passed from the tyranny of sin to the sphere in which was realized the power of Christ's risen life.[1]

In one passage, St. Paul's words do indeed suggest that Baptism is in itself the effective cause of the Christian life. 'Ye were washed, ye were sanctified, ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the Spirit of our God.'[2] Taken in isolation, his words here might mean, 'Your Christian life began with Baptism; then followed sanctification and justification.' But in the larger context of his teaching such an interpretation seems improbable. Even in this passage we cannot argue that Baptism precedes sanctification, unless we are prepared to claim that sanctification precedes justification. That surely was not the way St. Paul conceived the development of the Christian life. He is appealing to the Corinthians to show themselves less unworthy of the Gospel they profess, and, as part of this appeal, he reminds them of the solemn act of Baptism which was the symbol of their cleansing, the outward sign of their new life of consecration and of trust in the grace of God,

[1] Rom. vi. 1–9. Cp. Gal. iii. 26 f.

[2] 1 Cor. vi. 11. It is possible that *ἀπελούσασθε* is middle, not passive: 'ye washed yourselves'. So M. translates 'you washed yourselves, you were consecrated, you were justified', etc. Eph. v. 26 is often regarded as a parallel to this passage; but 'the washing of water' here is probably suggested, not by Baptism, but by the custom of a bride being bathed before marriage. If the reference is to Baptism, it can only be of a metaphorical kind. St. Paul could not speak literally of the Church, the Bride of Christ, being baptized.

through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the possession of God's Spirit.

Of great importance in this connexion is St. Paul's comparison of Baptism with circumcision. 'In Christ,' he writes, 'ye have the true circumcision—the circumcision which is not made with hands, but wrought by the Spirit—the circumcision which divests not of a part only, but of the whole carnal body—the circumcision which is not of Moses but of Christ. This circumcision ye have, because ye were buried with Christ to your old selves beneath the baptismal waters, and were raised with Him from those same waters to a new and regenerate life, through your faith in the powerful working of God who raised Him from the dead.' [1] Here St. Paul clearly states that it is through faith that Christians break with the old life and pass into the new, and that the rite which is the vivid expression of this experience derives its value, not from its material medium, but from the work of the Spirit. So, in another passage, speaking of Abraham's faith, he states emphatically that the faith which was counted to him as righteousness was a faith he had while still he was uncircumcized. His circumcision was 'the sign or seal of the righteousness which belonged to his faith as an uncircumcized man'.[2]

Time after time, St. Paul connects the new life in Christ with faith, and the reception of the Spirit. 'Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ.' [3] 'Faith rests on the power of God.' [4] It was 'in Christ Jesus' that St. Paul 'begat' his con-

[1] Col. ii. 11 f. Lightfoot's paraphrase *comm. in loc.*
[2] Rom. iv. 11 (M.).
[3] Rom. x. 17.
[4] 1 Cor. ii. 5.

verts 'through the Gospel'.[1] It seems needless then to suppose that St. Paul regarded Baptism as a second source of salvation. Baptism seemed to him highly important because for his adult converts it denoted their decisive entry into the Christian life. It did not create faith; it was faith's expression, and, at the same time, faith's confirmation. If we would understand the significance of Baptism to St. Paul we have once again to remember that his was a missionary vocation. To converts from paganism, Baptism is more than a symbol; it involves the definite abandonment of pagan practices and incorporation into the Christian Fellowship. As such, it marks as decisive a stage in life as do the giving and the receiving of the ring, and the solemn clasping of hands in Christian marriage. Such rites do not create love; they express it. Yet they are love's confirmation, and mark the beginning of a new life of close incorporation. With St. Paul faith was the primary response to the divine initiative and Baptism was faith's solemn expression. So little did he regard Baptism as, in itself, a source of the Christian life, that he could thank God that he himself had baptized very few, for Christ sent him, 'not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel'.[2]

(ii) *The Lord's Supper.*

St. Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper is given as part of his condemnation of the Corinthians for

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 15. (Cp. Kennedy, *St. Paul and the Mystery-Religions*, 1913, pp. 240 ff.)

[2] 1 Cor. i. 14, 17. It is true that St. Paul's thankfulness that he had not baptized more than a few was due to his fear that his adherents at Corinth would claim to have been baptized into his name and thus to be, in a special sense, his Christians. But the reference clearly shows

their failure to show the spirit of Christian love,[1] and for their attempt to retain associations with pagan feasts.[2] So little had some of them realized their obligations to the Christian Fellowship, that even the Lord's Supper had been turned into a manifestation, not of unity, but of disunion. The rich came early, and ate and drank even to excess. The poor, who could come only when their day's work was done, had less than they required. It was thus not surprising that there were factions in the Church. Rich and poor ate in the same place, and yet, through the meanness of the rich, there was no common meal. Sternly St. Paul rebukes such conduct. Those who thus behaved were putting to shame the Church of God, and the poorer of the Christians. If they wanted to eat a private meal, let them do so in their own homes. When Christians came together for the Lord's Supper, they must wait for each other. The Supper was not for the satisfaction of hunger, but for the remembrance of the Lord,[3] and in order to show how the Lord's Supper should be kept, St. Paul proceeds with solemn emphasis to remind them of the common Christian tradition of its institution by our Lord.

The question has been much discussed in recent years whether the first Lord's Supper was a Paschal feast, as the Synoptic Gospels in part imply. Many scholars hold that, in this, the Fourth Gospel has preserved the true tradition, and that the meal was

that for him, not baptizing, but preaching the Gospel, was of prime importance.

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 17–34. [2] 1 Cor. x. 14–21.

[3] 1 Cor. xi. 17–22, 33 f. The injunction in 33 f. looks in the direction of the separation of the Lord's Supper from the common meal of the Church.

not the Passover, but a meal eaten on the night preceding that of the Passover, so that our Lord's 'crucifixion and death' took place 'during the hours devoted to the slaughter and presentation of the Paschal victims at the Temple', whilst 'the resurrection' took place 'on the day on which the sheaf of first-fruits was presented at the Temple'.[1] If the youth (*νεανίσκος*) referred to in Mark xiv. 51 was, as is probable, Mark himself, then he was only a lad at the time, and the confusion in the Synoptic account is readily explained. Mark would have remembered that a solemn meal was held, and not unnaturally thought of this afterwards as the Passover, for, if the date of the Fourth Evangelist be right, the immediate followers of Jesus would that year have had no Passover. On the Passover day they would be sorrowing for their Master's death.

It is apparently the tradition which St. John's Gospel embodies that St. Paul had received. He connects the first Lord's Supper with the 'night in which Jesus was betrayed', but gives no indication that it was instituted in connexion with the Passover, whilst his reference to Jesus as our Passover slain for us [2] suggests that he, too, held that Jesus died at the time when the Paschal victims were slain, whilst his statement that Christ is the 'first-fruits' [3] goes well

[1] *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, by G. B. Gray, 1925, p. 388. Thus, according to the Fourth Evangelist, 'the crucifixion began after the sixth hour, i.e. noon (xix. 14) in the day of the Preparation: and Jesus died and was entombed the same afternoon before sunset (xix. 31, 42). The day following the crucifixion was not only the 15th of Nisan, on which the Passover was *eaten*, it was also a Sabbath (xix. 31), *op. cit.*, p. 387. Cp. Kennett, *The Last Supper*, 1921, 7 ff.; W. E. Barnes, *The Last Supper and the Lord's Supper*, 1927, p. 14.

[2] 1 Cor. v. 7. [3] 1 Cor. xv. 20.

with the belief that Jesus rose from the dead on the day when the sheaf of first-fruits was presented at the Temple.

With great probability it has been argued that the meal which Jesus took 'in the night in which He was betrayed' looked backwards as well as forwards, and was the more solemn re-enactment of a religious meal of fellowship which He held weekly with His disciples. Such sacred meals were held immediately before the Sabbath. When the meal was finished, a blessing over the food was pronounced. Then, as sunset fell, and the Sabbath began, prayers were uttered for the sanctification of the day, and the wine was drunk.[1] In the week of the crucifixion, our Lord would have taken this meal with His disciples on the Thursday, instead of on the Friday afternoon. The imminence of His death made it impossible for Him to eat the Passover, as He had desired, with His disciples. Instead, he gave to that weekly meal the added sacredness of the Passover Feast. No lamb was eaten. But the bread and the wine served to represent His body and His blood, and thus were the fit symbols of the new covenant which His death would inaugurate.

Such an interpretation explains much that before has been obscure, and it is probable that 'the breaking of the bread' to which Acts refers was connected in the first place with these weekly religious meals[2] and

[1] For the connexion of the Lord's Supper with the *Qiddush* ceremony, see G. H. Box, 'The Jewish Background of the Institution of the Eucharist,' *The Jewish Guardian*, December 7, 1923, and Lietzmann, *Messe und Herrenmahl*, 1926, pp. 212, 228.

[2] E.g. ii. 42; xx. 11. So in Luke xx. 30, 35, two disciples, who had not been at the Last Supper, recognized the risen Lord at 'the breaking of the bread'.

the common meal of the Church which at Corinth came first may likewise have here its origin.

Whatever be the origin of the Lord's Supper, this at least seems clear: in the account which St. Paul gives of its institution, he believed that he was expressing the authentic tradition of the whole Church. He passed on to the Corinthians what he had received from the Lord. In Galatians i. 11 he declared that the Gospel which he preached had come to him through the revelation of Jesus Christ, not through the traditions of men. But that Gospel was the proclamation of a God whose grace was received by faith alone. The historic facts of Christianity came to him, not by revelation, but by the traditions of the Church. Thus in 1 Corinthians xv. 3 f. he declares that he delivered unto the Corinthians what he had himself received—the two great facts of the common Christian creed that Christ died for our sins, and that He rose again. In the same way here he declares with great solemnity that the account he had given of the institution of the Lord's Supper was a tradition he had received—a tradition which had its source in the Lord.[1] 'Christ took a loaf and having given thanks broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me". In like manner also he took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me".' Thus the Lord's Supper was a setting forth of the Lord's death 'till he come'.[2]

[1] This is the only natural meaning of the words, *παρέλαβον, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα*. Cp. 1 Cor. xv. 3, *παρέδωκα ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον*.

[2] 1 Cor. xi. 23–6. The word 'broken' in *v.* 24 is omitted in some MSS., but as Dr. Moffatt says in a footnote in his translation, 'If it is a

Behind these solemn words there seems to lie the sense of the Real Presence of Christ at His table. He was there, and as His followers ate of the loaf, and drank from the cup, they were meant to enter anew into the meaning of His death. To fail to do so was to be 'guilty of the body and blood of the Lord', for those who thus failed were rejecting Him at His table, where He was present, and thus sharing in the guilt of those who crucified Him. So St. Paul warns the Corinthians not to eat and drink heedlessly, lest they eat and drink judgement to themselves 'not discerning the Lord's body'. The meaning of this phrase has been much discussed. It seems to be more than a reiteration of his previous warning. Then he warned them not to commemorate Christ's death without being solemnized by its meaning. Here he seems to pass to the other and more inclusive meaning of the body, the fellowship of believers, which was the body of Christ on earth. If so, he has in mind the special scandal of the Corinthian Church. The rich had eaten their feast without regard to the needs of the poorer members. Such action was a sin against Christian love; it showed that they had not 'discerned the Lord's body', had not recognized the obligations of the Christian Fellowship. Thus the sin which, as St. Paul believed, had already brought down on some God's chastisement, was not failure to use the right words, as if they were a pagan charm. It was the failure to show to each other Christian kindness and courtesy—a failure which had turned

gloss, it is a correct one, unless the Lucan *διδόμενον* (given) be preferred'. 'In remembrance of me' does not express the full meaning of the Greek, which means rather, as Dr. C. A. Scott puts it, 'with a view to recalling me'. *Christianity according to St. Paul*, 1927, p. 191.

the feast of love into an occasion of greed and arrogance.

In 1 Corinthians x. 14–22, St. Paul refers to the Communion Service in the context of his condemnation of Christians who had participated in idolatrous feasts. Elsewhere in this letter he had declared that idols are nothing, so that the question whether Christians might eat food which had been offered to idols in the market place was not one of principle but of expediency. For the weak, such food was perilous, for, by eating it, they would feel that they were once more coming into contact with the gods to whom it had been consecrated. The strong, who had no such fear, could eat it with impunity. The only need there was to refrain from doing so, was the obligation of Christian love, which would not permit any action, however legitimate, which might imperil the faith of those who were weak and ignorant, for, for them too, Christ had died.[1] But to attend a pagan feast where sacrifices were offered to idols was not a matter of indifference. The thing sacrificed to idols was nothing, and an idol was nothing. But to go where idols were worshipped was to go where demons are.[2] To share in an idolatrous feast was thus to have communion with demons. That for a Christian was impossible. Christ was not a pagan god who would be content with a divided allegiance. No Christian may drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons, nor partake of both the table of the Lord and the table of demons. It is in this context that St. Paul declares that the cup of blessing which

[1] 1 Cor. viii. See earlier, pp. 147 and 163.

[2] As converts from paganism still believe. On this see earlier, p. 147.

we bless is a communion of the blood of Christ; the bread which we break is a communion of the body of Christ.

These words are cryptic in their brevity. In what sense did St. Paul suppose that Christians at the Lord's Supper participated in the blood and the body of Christ? He does not say that those who shared in pagan feasts ate the flesh and drank the blood of demons. On the contrary, he affirms that the thing sacrificed is nothing. There is no suggestion then in his words that the wine and bread of the Lord's Supper became, in any sense, the blood and body of Christ. That interpretation, at least, is excluded. The meaning seems to be not dissimilar to that which we have found in the eleventh chapter of this Epistle. The Communion, the participation or partnership in the blood of Christ denotes the memory, and more than the memory—the present realization of the meaning of Christ's death. At the Lord's Table, the Lord is present, and the believer receives anew the blessings of the covenant sealed by Christ's blood, the new relationship of forgiveness connected supremely with Christ's death. It is as if he saw Christ on the Cross before him, and St. Paul may also mean that, as Baptism typifies the Christian's death to sin and his share in Christ's risen life, so, at the Lord's Supper, the believer re-enacts the death of his Lord, by dying anew to sin. So closely does St. Paul connect the Christian Fellowship with the Lord that here, too, it is hard to say whether by the body typified by the loaf he meant, in the first instance, the risen Lord or the Church on earth. 'We who are many are one loaf, one body.' All Christians are incorporated into Christ, and into the Church which is His body. It is probable that

it is this thought which is uppermost here in his mind. As in 1 Corinthians xi. 29 the failure 'to discern the body' of the Lord seems to denote the failure to realize the meaning of the Christian Fellowship, so here the participation in the body of Christ seems to refer primarily to sharing in that Christian fellowship which is the body of Christ. To partake of pagan feasts was thus doubly wrong. It was to forget the solemn import of Christ's death, of which the Lord's Supper speaks; it was to break away from the Christian Fellowship. Those who were incorporated with Christ could have no share in pagan rites. They were associated with Christ at His table; they could not go to idolatrous feasts where they would become the associates of demons.

(iii) *The Supposed Pagan Origin of St. Paul's Conception of the Sacraments.*

The interpretation we have given to St. Paul's references to the Sacraments differs much from that given to-day by some scholars. By these, St. Paul's interpretation of the Sacraments is approximated to ideas connected with pagan mystery-cults from which, it is claimed, his conceptions were derived. Thus Dr. Kirsopp Lake declares that 'Baptism is, for St. Paul and his readers, universally and unquestionably accepted as a "mystery" or sacrament which works *ex opere operato*', whilst of the Eucharist he says that 'the Catholic doctrine is much more nearly primitive than the Protestant'. Such a judgement is naturally approved by those whose own piety, being of the 'Catholic' type, give to St. Paul's words a Catholic meaning. But Dr. Lake does not stop there; he adds, 'The Catholic advocate in winning his case has proved

still more: the type of doctrine which he defends is not only primitve, but pre-Christian.' [1] And in this context, 'pre-Christian' is only another word for 'pagan'.

It is a familiar fact of religious history that whereas innovations in doctrine may be for the time unnoticed, innovations in ritual at once attract observation. It seems incredible that the observance of the Lord's Supper should owe to St. Paul its origin. That to-day is generally admitted. The derivation of his conception of the sacraments from the mystery-cults forms part of the attempt to explain away his whole conception of Christianity by current myths of saviour-gods who died and rose again. The most distinguished advocates of this view now assign this radical transformation of Christianity from loyalty to a Messiah to faith in a risen Lord to the first converts from Hellenism at Antioch and Damascus. It was, they tell us, to this Hellenized Christianity that St. Paul was converted, and, before his conversion, the essential alterations in Christianity had already taken place.[2]

Such a modification has the advantage of making the theory harder to disprove, for of the theology of the first Gentile Christianity we know nothing. But it does not remove its inherent improbability. There still remains unexplained the acquiescence of the Jerusalem Christians in this fundamental alteration of their religion. St. Paul had many enemies among the Judaizers. They saw that St. Paul's interpreta-

[1] *The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul*[3], pp. 385 and 215.

[2] E.g. Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*[3], 1921, p. 239. For similar views of other scholars of this school see earlier, pp. 67 ff, where the cognate problem of the ascription to Jesus of Lordship is discussed.

tion of Christianity differed from their own in its attitude to the Law, but nowhere is there any suggestion in the Epistles that even their hatred of St. Paul led them to accuse him of any innovation in his teaching on the place of Christ, and on the meaning of the Sacraments.

The faith of St. Paul and of the early Church does indeed present a problem which is, so far as we know, without parallel in the history of religions. Within a few years of the death of Jesus, his followers believed that He was their risen Lord, and that He intended that they should baptize in His name, and commemorate His death at a meal at which He Himself was spiritually present. Such a belief is of so extraordinary a kind that if we reject its truth, it is inevitable that we should seek to explain it from alien sources, and if, with these scholars, we assume that it is false, then the influence of the mystery-cults provides the only solution which to-day is credible.

Even Dr. Lake admits that 'Our knowledge of the actual ceremonies and liturgies' of the mystery-cults 'is very small, as almost all documentary evidence has been destroyed'.[1] Scholars of this school have a way of ignoring dates. Not only do they quote evidence belonging to a period long after that of St. Paul, but some supplement the evidence by speaking as if there still existed in his time ideas and practices which belong to an early age. Thus the barbaric idea of 'eating the god' was, so far as we can judge by the evidence, already outgrown in St. Paul's age. As Cicero says 'When we call grain Ceres or wine Liber, we merely use a common style of speech, but do you

[1] *The Stewardship of Faith*, p. 71.

think that anyone is so insane as to suppose that what he eats is God?' [1] Yet it is first assumed that St. Paul held that belief, and then this belief is assigned to pagan influences. It is easy to speak of redeemer-gods who die and rise again, and of their mysteries as if they could be equated with what some scholars like to call the 'mysteries' of Christianity. But the evidence of the mystery-cults cannot fairly be described in such simple and Christian language.[2]

Once again we have to remember that St. Paul before his conversion was not a pagan, but a Jew. The mystery-cults presuppose the ideas of paganism. The background of St. Paul's piety was, not the belief in many gods, one of whom could receive especial worship, but the stern monotheism of Judaism with its intolerance of a divided worship. Though St. Paul was influenced by Græco-Oriental thought, he yet remained a Jew, and it seems impossible to do as Loisy did, and interpret his Christianity by 'the pagan myth of an immolated god' so that the Christianity he preached was primarily a mystery-religion although enriched by the memory of Jesus which gave to it its 'incomparable charm'.[3] Such an interpretation ignores the fact that St. Paul was not concerned only, or even chiefly, with a Christ-cult. His prime concern was with the grace of God revealed in Christ, and received by faith. But if St. Paul thus preached

[1] *De natura deorum*, III, xv. 41. As Dr. Glover reminds us, even the Christians were not accused of eating their God. What they were accused of 'was eating babes'. *Paul of Tarsus* [3], 1927, p. 164.

[2] For the myths of these redeemer-gods see Note B, and for the evidence for the sacraments of the mystery-cults, Note C.

[3] *Les Mystères Païens et Le Mystère Chrétien*, pp. 14, 249, 340, 344.

salvation by faith, then, if he interpreted the sacraments in the way scholars of this school assert, we are compelled to hold with Weinel, that they are an 'alien element in his religion'.[1]

In the passages we have already studied, it has been unnecessary to interpret St. Paul's meaning in such a way as to make his conception of the Sacraments an 'alien element in his religion'. Here, too, he writes as one to whom the grace of God and the faith of man were of primary importance. There remain two passages in which it is claimed that we have clear proof that St. Paul interpreted the Sacraments in a pagan way, 1 Corinthians xi. 30 and 1 Corinthians xv. 29.

In 1 Corinthians xi. 30, St. Paul describes the sickness and death which had already befallen some of his Corinthian converts as the consequence of their failure worthily 'to eat the loaf and drink the cup of the Lord'. It is claimed that we have here a proof that St. Paul believed that at the Lord's Table men ate the body and drank the blood of Christ. Lietzmann explains that as the Eucharist was for St. Paul, in St. Ignatius' phrase, a 'medicine of immortality' (*φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*), so, if wrongly used, it was for him a 'medicine of death' (*φάρμακον θανάτου*).[2] Bousset, while admitting that St. Paul has spiritualized the conception by assigning the evil effects of unworthy eating and drinking to the judgement of God, yet maintains that behind his thought 'lies the faith in the miraculous working of holy food, whether for blessing or destruction'.[3]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 310. So even Heitmüller, *Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum*, 1911, p. 75.

[2] *Comm. in loc.*, *H.B.N.T.*

[3] *Comm. in loc.*, *S.N.T.*

Such interpretations seem not only fanciful, but irrelevant. As we have seen, the totemistic idea of 'eating the god' had already been outgrown by the Græco-Oriental paganism of St. Paul's time, whilst, whatever be the meaning of Ignatius' phrase, in its common interpretation, it does not express St. Paul's conception of the Lord's Supper. The extreme solemnity of his words seems rather to be due to his belief that the Lord was present at His table. His death was so commemorated that men were judged by their attitude to the Christ who had died for them. Those who partook unworthily were 'guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord' in that, as the writer of Hebrews puts it, they 'crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.' [1] The sin which St. Paul is here denouncing is the sin of unbrotherliness, a sin made more serious and decisive, because committed at the Lord's table, and in connexion with the commemoration of His death. Those who committed this sin were failing 'to discern the body'. This may mean that they were acting as those only could act who did not realize that the Lord was present at His table. More probably, as we have seen, St. Paul is here thinking of the other meaning of the loaf. Those who failed to discern the Lord's body were those who did not realize the obligations of that Christian Fellowship which is the body of Christ on earth. If an alien influence is to be detected in St. Paul's view that the sickness and death of some of the Corinthian Christians was due to their unworthy conduct at the Lord's Supper, then that influence seems not pagan but Jewish—the influence of that Jewish theory of retribution which saw in

[1] Heb. vi. 6.

sickness and in premature death the direct punishments of God.[1]

In 1 Corinthians xv. 29, St. Paul exclaims, 'If there is no such thing as a resurrection, what is the meaning of people getting baptized on behalf of the dead? If dead men do not rise at all, why do people get baptized on their behalf?'[2] Of such vicarious baptism we know nothing. Later some Christian heretics are said to have this custom, but, if they had it, it may have arisen from this verse. Such a practice would not have sounded altogether strange to pagans, but, as yet, no exact parallel in contemporary paganism has been found.[3] Whether the dead for whom this vicarious baptism was performed were pagan or Christian we do not know. It is probable that they were Christians who had died unbaptized. Whatever be the nature of this vicarious baptism, as it was obviously independent of the faith of the dead, it was not only sacramental but magical. It is customary to interpret the unknown by the known. But some scholars would have us here reverse this process, and interpret St. Paul's own conceptions of Baptism by this obscure reference to a custom observed by the least satisfactory of his converts. We 'are foisting on Paul', we are told, 'a petty Jesuitry' if we speak as if he did not share the belief which lay behind this

[1] Cp., in contrast, our Lord's reference to the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with the sacrifices and to those on whom the tower in Siloam fell. Luke xiii. 1–4.

[2] Moffatt's trans.

[3] See Lietzmann, *comm. in loc.* for Chrysostom's statement that the Marcionites, and Epiphanius's statement that the Corinthians, practised baptism for the dead. Lietzmann quotes as the nearest pagan parallel a reference from the *Orphica* to a vicarious festival for the unconsecrated dead in connexion with the Dionysaic mysteries.

custom. Instead, 'we must have the courage' to admit that Paul shared his readers' view of the Sacrament—a view than which no view could be 'more magical'.[1]

Such a statement shows a curious ignorance of the realities of missionary work. Converts such as those St. Paul was addressing at Corinth inevitably interpret Christianity from the standpoint of pagan beliefs and practices. It is useless for a missionary to seek to eradicate from ignorant converts from paganism the remains of pagan modes of thought. Many do indeed try to do so in their first years of inexperience. Later they grow wiser, and are content if, in any way, such Christians can be led to the realization of Christ's revelation of God, and the demands for Christian character that that revelation involves. St. Paul was an experienced missionary. It was not 'Jesuitry', but missionary wisdom which made him leave unrebuked intellectual errors, if only they would learn the grace of God, the Lordship of Christ, and the meaning of life in the Spirit. That some of St. Paul's converts understood Christianity in a partly pagan way, this reference to vicarious baptism clearly proves. It does not follow that St. Paul himself thus thought of Baptism as if it had magical power.

In another passage in this Epistle St. Paul clearly shows that he did not himself share the view that salvation can come by external rites alone. The Israelites in the wilderness had been baptized into Moses; they had eaten of manna, a spiritual food. They had drunk of a spiritual rock which was Christ.[2]

[1] Weinel, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*[3], p. 304.

[2] St. Paul here utilizes the Rabbinic tradition that the rock from which the water flowed followed the Israelites throughout their jour-

Yet these things had not saved them from sin, and from the punishment which sin involves. St. Paul uses this story to illustrate that neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper are in themselves sufficient.[1] That such a warning was necessary shows that his converts from paganism were tempted to think that the Sacraments were sufficient to keep them safe, but it shows also that St. Paul himself held no such view.

St. Paul thus gave to the Sacraments a solemn significance. This missionary who realized the importance of a decisive break with paganism would not have understood how any man who by his faith had become one with Christ should refrain from the outward sign of his incorporation with Christ, and so with the Christian Fellowship, whilst he thought of the Lord's Supper with the awe which belonged to the place where Christ was present with His people, and the meaning of His death was vividly realized. But, although he thus gave to the Sacraments a high place, all was subordinated to the grace of God received by faith. There is clear evidence that some of his converts from paganism interpreted the Sacraments in a partly pagan way. There is no evidence that he himself thus succumbed to pagan influences.

neys through the wilderness. Philo had identified this rock with the Wisdom of God. St. Paul instead claims that it was the pre-existent Christ.

[1] 1 Cor. x. 1–13.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST THINGS

NO part of St. Paul's missionary message is so difficult to express in ordered form as his Eschatology—his teaching about the Last Things. As a Jew he had had two supreme religious interests: the quest for 'righteousness' by the attempt to fulfil the dictates of the Law, and the expectation of redemption, connected with his Messianic hope. His experience of the grace of God in Christ led him to a radical transformation of his idea of 'righteousness', and to an almost complete rejection of the legal conception of God's dealing with the race. But in so far as his expectation of redemption concerned the future it was obviously removed from the correction of Christian experience. Christianity brought to him the partial realization of the salvation he had looked for only at the end of this age, but in his hope of the future he remained bound to his Jewish expectations, and much of the inconsistency of his teaching here is due to his attempt to express the new facts of Christianity in terms which belonged to the alien world of Jewish apocalypse. We may say, if we will, that St. Paul had 'no eschatology', if by that we mean that he never 'approached the subject in a systematic fashion',[1] and

[1] *St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, by H. A. A. Kennedy, 1904, p. 21.

yet his whole missionary message was eschatologically conceived, for it was expressed in the Jewish contrast between this 'present age' and 'the age to come'.

It is impossible to speak of the future life except through symbols, for we have somehow to describe the eternal in terms of time and space. Sometimes, indeed, St. Paul speaks of the future glory in terms which to the logician are merely negations. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'[1] St. Paul did not confine himself to such 'numinous' negations, but in his early Epistles, especially, uses the vivid symbols of Jewish apocalypse—symbols which seem so soon to have fascinated his Gentile converts that they were as familiar to them as to the Jewish Christians.

I. The Day of the Lord

As a Jew Paul had looked for the sudden appearance of the Messiah, and as a Christian he shared the common Christian hope that the *Parousia*,[2] the Presence of the Lord, would shortly be manifested. So vividly had he proclaimed at Thessalonica the coming of that Day of the Lord which would mean for Christians the consummation of their redemption, and for unbelievers the revelation of the Wrath from which Christ would deliver all who trust in Him, that some of the Christians there were not unnaturally concerned

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

[2] *Parousia* is the technical term in the New Testament for the Presence, the Appearing of the Lord (cp. Matt. xxiv. 3, 24, 27; Jas. v. 7; 2 Pet. i. 16; iii. 4, 12; 1 John, ii. 28). In the Papyri the word is often used to describe the visit of a king or a high official.

about the fate of their Christian friends who had died before Christ appeared. St. Paul writes to reassure them.[1] Those who have 'fallen asleep in Jesus' will rise from the dead, and have their share in the glory of Christ's appearance. This he expressed in the terms of Jewish apocalypse. The descent of the Lord with a shout, the voice of an archangel, the trump of God[2]—such terms belong to the background of St. Paul's thought, and have little importance for his religion. Some of the details of his picture we cannot even understand. What, for instance, did St. Paul mean when he spoke of meeting 'the Lord in the air'? Did he mean that there would be a Millennial kingdom 'in the clouds, between the earth and heaven'?[3] To such a question we can give no certain answer. Even if we knew more than we do of the Apocalyptic framework of St. Paul's thought, it would be futile to attempt to translate these poetic symbols into sober prose. When modern students sing Blake's *Jerusalem* they do not actually desire a 'bow of burning gold', or 'arrows of desire', that they may build Jerusalem 'in England's green and pleasant land'. Such apocalyptic imagery has a meaning which is emotional, not intellectual. It expresses aspirations too vague and ill-defined to be expressed in intelligible concepts. We cannot then press the details of this passage. Its importance lies in the vivid expectation it reveals of the swift and sudden return of Christ.

It is not surprising that some of the Thessalonian Christians gave up their livelihood to spend their time in preparation for Christ's Appearance. That was far from St. Paul's intention. With himself, the expecta-

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13–18. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 52.
[3] Cp. J. Weiss, *Urchristentum*, p. 422.

tion of Christ's return led, not to idleness, but to increased energy. He would not have his converts idle busybodies. Let them work with quietness, not looking to others for maintenance, but eating their own bread. When he had been at Thessalonica, St. Paul had taught that 'if any will not work, neither let him eat'.[1] Besides, he had not meant the Christians there to believe that Christ would at once appear. Instead, he had explained that, before Christ returned, the Man of Sin would be revealed. That, for the time, was impossible, for there was a restraining power which kept as yet the Man of Sin in check. Not till that restraint was gone could the Lawless One be revealed whom the Lord Jesus would slay at His coming.[2] We cannot be sure of the precise meaning of St. Paul's words. In some of the Jewish Apocalypses there is the expectation that the appearance in glory of the Messiah would be preceded by a period of great tribulation, and there is some slight evidence to show that already there was the belief that this tribulation would be connected with the coming of Antichrist.[3] The 'restraining power' seems to be the Roman Empire, but this the Thessalonians could scarcely have discovered from St. Paul's words, unless he had already explained this to them when he was with them. The Apocalyptic symbols St. Paul here employs are to us so strange and unfamiliar that they have naturally led to much discussion. But St. Paul is not writing as an Apocalyptist, seeking to unveil the mystery of the future. Although he uses the traditional imagery of Apocalypse, he is writing as a 'working missionary', intent on meeting the practical

[1] 2 Thess. iii. 10 ff. [2] 2 Thess. ii. 3–10.
[3] Cp. Bousset, *Die Religion des Judentums*[3], pp. 254 ff.

necessities of his converts, and supporting his instruction by a reference to beliefs which they already shared.

It is this eager expectation of the Second Advent of Christ which explains much in his ethical teaching which, at first sight, seems strange. Much of his ethic is an 'ethic of the interim' for he faced many of the problems of his converts as one who believed that the end of the age was so near that outward circumstances mattered little. To be married or unmarried, to be free or enslaved, to be rich or poor—such differences mattered little to one who believed that the Lord was at hand. What mattered only was this: that every Christian, in whatever state he was, should in it serve the Lord. In this way, the liberating freedom of the Gospel was confined for the time to the sphere of religion. External circumstances seemed too transitory to have any importance. Why trouble about the things of this world when the end of the world was near? [1]

By this shortening of horizon, not only was Christianity saved from the perils of revolutionary propaganda but the writings of St. Paul, written to meet special and immediate needs, have become part of the Sacred Scripture of the Church without at the same time restricting the social obligations of later Christian ages to the circumstances of St. Paul's own age. In Islam, for instance, it has always been difficult to meet the needs of a new age without coming into collision with the belief that the detailed commands of the *Quran* and the Traditions are of universal and permanent obligation. At times timid ecclesiastics

[1] See earlier, pp. 200, 208, for his treatment of such problems as marriage and slavery.

have treated St. Paul's commands in like fashion,[1] but for that he was not responsible. He made no attempt to lay down regulations for future generations. He spoke to his own generation as one who believed that his generation would be the last, and, because he thus thought that he was at the end of time, his words have a timelessness which otherwise they would have lacked. We find in his writings none of the interest in the details of organization, and in the provision of a new legalism, which marked succeeding ages. He concentrated, instead, on the great religious principles of Christianity, and because he was concerned with religious, and not with social or economic estimates, his religious estimates can become for us, as we face our very different problems, an inspiration and not a burden.

II. The Second Advent and the Future of the Church

St. Paul's expectation of the speedy Return of Christ makes it impossible for us to speak with some modern writers of his 'missionary strategy'. This townsman possessing the citizenship of Rome naturally did his missionary work chiefly in the great towns and used to the full the means of communication which the Roman peace afforded. But it seems an anachronism to suppose that St. Paul had any conscious plan of making Christianity the religion of a purified Roman Empire.[2] Such thoughts lay beyond his horizon. He preached where he believed God willed that he

[1] E.g. the prohibition against women having their head uncovered, or speaking in Church.

[2] As Sir W. Ramsay suggested. *The Cities of St. Paul*, p. 429.

should preach, and desired to proclaim the Gospel, not in Rome alone, but in Spain,[1] the western limit of his Mediterranean world. But of deliberate strategy we can find no trace. He was not consciously founding a Church which should develop through the centuries. He did not think of himself as an 'ecclesiastical statesman'. His work it was to spread far and wide the knowledge of the Gospel, that, when Christ returned, there might be many to greet Him with joy, as those freed in part from the tyranny of all evil powers, and so ready to enter into the full glory of the age to come.

Yet St. Paul's missionary aspirations reached out to a success which obviously required more than a few years to attain. He felt that he himself had been set apart by Christ to win the Gentiles to the 'obedience of faith', and he resisted any compromise which would have hindered that task by making Christianity a merely Jewish sect. But the unwillingness of his own people to accept the Gospel weighed heavily on his heart. As a Jew, he had learned to refer all events to God's activity. Was it then God's will that the Jews should be rejected? It is significant that the section in the Epistle to the Romans in which this problem is discussed comes immediately after that great pæan of Christian hope which forms the climax of the eighth chapter. In it St. Paul looked away from the human response to the divine initiative. It is God who foreknows, foreordains, calls, justifies and glorifies. It is God who will conform believers to the image of His Son. God has given to the world His Son, and to His Son a cross. All that our salvation requires He has provided. No power in earth or

[1] Rom. xv. 24.

heaven or hell can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This emphasis on the divine initiative intensified the problem which the unbelief of the Jews created for this patriotic Jew, and he has to pass from the glad confidence of the eighth chapter to the sombre musings of chapters nine to eleven. If God did all, was the unbelief of the Jews caused by His exclusion of them from the promises? St. Paul himself would gladly have been damned if his kinsmen could be saved. How could the Jews be saved, and when?

These chapters have been described as 'Paul's philosophy of history'. The phrase does not seem a happy one. When we pierce behind the Jewish dialectic, we find, not so much a 'philosophy of history', as a hope, or rather a prayer, that somehow his own people should be saved. St. Paul was not a philosopher. He had not learned to bring into unity the sovereignty of God, and the free-will of man. Here, in these chapters, it is of the divine activity that he chiefly thinks. By God's will, the Gentiles had become heirs of the Jewish promises by a process as unnatural and as strange as the grafting of branches of the wild-olive into the cultivated tree. But Jews were not thereby excluded. Already there was a Jewish 'remnant' in the Christian Church. Why had not the Jews as a whole become Christian? St. Paul gives the historic reason, their lack of faith.[1] But he is not content with that explanation. He speaks also of God's 'hardening', and of 'the spirit of stupor' which He has given them.[2] Yet even this was of His mercy. By their sin, salvation had come to the Gentiles. Their fall was thus 'the riches of the world,

[1] Rom. ix. 32. Cp. iii. 3. [2] Rom. xi. 7 f.

and their loss the riches of the Gentiles'. In the end, the success of Christianity among the Gentiles would stir up the Jews to 'jealousy' and lead them to imitate the Gentiles' faith. The Jews had been rejected, like branches cut off from the cultivated tree. But, if they believed, these branches would be grafted in again, and so, at last, all Israel would be saved.

We have here not so much a coherent theory, or a 'philosophy of history', as an expression of the intense longing for the conversion of his people of one who, in spite of all the baffling mysteries of God's providence, was sure that God's ways were ways of mercy, and, in the end, He would prevail. 'Of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever.'[1]

III. Variations in St. Paul's Expectation of the Second Advent

It seems difficult to reconcile St. Paul's hope that first the Gentiles and then the Jews would become Christians with his expectation of the swift return of Christ. St. Paul had planted Christianity in many parts of the Empire and looked forward to extending his work as far west as Spain. Yet the congregations that he founded were small and insignificant, and the progress of Christianity was slow. Surely he must have realized that there was little likelihood that in his lifetime the whole of the world he knew would be converted.

To explain this apparent contradiction some scholars have claimed that it is possible to trace a development in St. Paul's thought, due to his gradual emancipation

[1] Rom. xi. 11–36. On the moral problem which these chapters present see earlier pp. 97 f.

from conceptions derived from Jewish Apocalypse.[1] It seems better to speak, instead, not of orderly development, but of variations in the emotional tension with which St. Paul looked for our Lord's return. The expectation that the Second Advent was near is found not only in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, but in what is regarded by many scholars as the last of his extant writings, the Epistle to the Philippians, where he again proclaims that 'the Lord is at hand'.[2] Yet St. Paul's expectation varies in its intensity and oscillates between 'soon' and 'not yet'. At first the 'soon' predominated. He warned, indeed, the Thessalonians that the Advent would be delayed,[3] and yet he confidently expected that he would be alive when Christ appeared.[4] Later the 'soon' and the 'not yet' were, as Bricka puts it, in 'equilibrium'. In Asia, he had been very near to death, and so had had to face the possibility that he would die before Christ returned.[5] In the Epistle to the Philippians, although the 'soon' remains, it is the 'not yet' that predominates. If death came, he could rejoice. He would not have to wait in insentient sleep until the

[1] Cp. the persuasive statement of this position in R. H. Charles, *The Doctrine of a Future Life*, 1899, pp. 379–405. Dr. Charles, while admitting that 'perfect consistency within these stages is not to be looked for' marks our four stages of development represented by (i) 1 and 2 Thess., (ii) 1 Cor., (iii) 2 Cor. and Rom., (iv) Phil., Col. and Eph.

[2] Phil. iv. 5. For what follows see especially Bricka, *Le fondement christologique de la morale paulienne*, pp. 65 ff.

[3] 2 Thess. ii. 2 f.

[4] 1 Thess. 15 ff.; 1 Cor. vii. 29 and xv. 51 f.

[5] 2 Cor. i. 8 ff.; v. 4. Cp. Rom. xiii. 11 f. with xv. 28 (the voyage to Spain) and viii. 38, where the fear of death is faced and overcome. The two aspects are summed up in xiv. 8 (whether we live or die, it is to the Lord).

time when Christ returned. At once, he would be with Christ which for himself, in prison and very weary, would be better far. Yet duty was more to him than the desire to enjoy a fellowship with Christ unmarred by earthly sorrow. If longer life was given him, it would mean more opportunity of earthly service. If he was offered up like a sacrifice for his converts' faith, that was well. But, if he lived, that, too, was well.[1]

It is impossible to express St. Paul's conception of the Last Things by any simple formula. Dealt with in isolation, his teaching here seems inconsistent, and, indeed, contradictory. But to state his teaching in isolation is to misrepresent it. His hope for the future did not exist in isolation, it was combined with faith and love to form his complete response to the Christian Gospel. His Christian experience, of which his hope for the future was a part, found its unity in his attitude to Christ. Because Christ was to him at once the pre-existent Messiah of whom he thought with adoration, the historic Jesus whose death upon the Cross was always in his mind, and the exalted Lord with whom already he was in communion, he looked forward with eager hope to the time when Christ should appear in triumph to consummate His work.[2] It was Christ who dominated his thought, and his 'eschatology' was little more than an expression of his confidence that the salvation which Christians already, in part, experienced would one day be complete.

It is this which explains St. Paul's persistence, in spite of all that seemed to contradict it, in his expecta-

[1] Cp. Phil. i. 23 f.; ii. 17; and iii. 11 with iii. 20 and iv. 5.

[2] Cp. Bricka, *op. cit.*, pp. 73 f.

tion of the coming again of Christ. We have seen how close is the affinity of St. Paul's thought to that sombre estimate of man's need depicted in *4 Ezra*. As a Jew his hope of the appearance of the Messiah had probably been combined with fear that very few would be saved, and that he himself might not be among them.[1] As a Christian, the dominant note of his experience was not fear, but a joyous hope. Already those that believed in Christ were redeemed in part from the tyrannies that oppress this evil age, and, knowing that Jesus delivered them from the wrath to come, could look with confidence for the coming of God's Son from heaven.[2] Christians were those who waited for the revelation of their Lord Jesus Christ,[3] and, as St. Paul contemplated the wonder of God's grace in Christ, he could speak as if their salvation was assured. There was now 'no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus'. No power in the whole universe could separate them from the love of God in Christ.[4] Delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's love, they were 'partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light'. Their life was 'hid with Christ in God', and when Christ, their life, should be manifested, they also should be manifested with Him in glory.[5] So St. Paul could look forward with glad confidence to the perfection of God's work in his converts' hearts. Their life on earth was that of colonists of the heavenly kingdom. When Christ should appear, they would be freed from the humiliation of their earthly life to share in His glory. So they could 'rejoice in the

[1] Cp. the quotations from *4 Ezra* vii. given on p. 35.
[2] 1 Thess. i. 9 f.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 7.
[4] Rom. viii. 1 and 38 f.
[5] Col. i. 12 ff.; iii. 3 f.

Lord always', showing, in spite of all their difficulties, a forbearing spirit, for 'the Lord was at hand'.[1]

It was the full glory of Christ and the consummation of the Christian salvation that he longed to see. The question whether that hope was to be realized on earth or after death he learnt to count as unimportant. And the expectation of Christ's return did not lead him to an other-worldliness which ignored the claim of duty. Instead, it inspired him to glad and eager service, and he so preached the hope of Christ's return as to stimulate his converts to lives of watchfulness and discipline.

IV. The Resurrection Body

When we pass from the general consideration of St. Paul's Christian hope to his description of the nature of the Resurrection body, we enter a sphere where much is as yet obscure, and where adequate discussion would require a detailed criticism of the various views of modern scholars which would be out of proportion with the place which St. Paul's teaching on this theme had in his missionary message.

We have seen how at Thessalonica the expectation of the speedy return of Christ led some of his converts there to be perplexed and anxious about those who had died before that glad event. At Corinth there emerged a more subtle problem. Some of the Christians there, while accepting the universal Christian belief in the Resurrection of Christ, had doubts about the resurrection of individual believers. Through its use at the Burial Service no chapter is more familiar to us modern Christians than 1 Corinthians xv. in which St. Paul deals with this perplexity. Yet, familiar as

[1] Phil. iii. 20 f.; iv. 4 f.

is the chapter, many of its statements as yet defy clear exegesis. The abruptness with which the discussion is introduced, suggests that the problem with which it deals was one about which the Corinthians had written. We have not their letter, and in consequence St. Paul's answer cannot be interpreted with certainty.

It seems improbable that even at Corinth men who counted themselves Christians could, like the Epicureans, have denied the immortality of the soul. Even among pagans there were many who believed in some sort of immortality. The Platonists spoke of it with certainty, whilst the adherents of the Mysteries assumed its truth. The Stoics, in general, though interested in immortality, were uncertain of it. Even to Seneca, in spite of the theistic colouring of his thought, it seemed only 'a lovely dream'.[1] There was, indeed, the popular animistic belief in the continuance of life in a dim underworld, but that belief was scorned by many thinking men. We do not know which of the current pagan views had influenced St. Paul's converts from paganism at Corinth. It is hard to believe that they rejected all belief in immortality. But there was a great difference between a vague belief in the continuance of the soul and St. Paul's Christian certainty that at the Resurrection believing men would receive a body like to Christ's in glory.

What the Corinthian Christians were concerned to deny was, in all probability, not immortality, but St. Paul's doctrine of the resurrection body, which they seem to have confused with the popular Jewish view that the bodies of the dead would, after a long sleep,

[1] *Ep.*, cii. 2.

be raised from the grave at the Resurrection.[1] A belief in such a resurrection body was contrary not only to the scepticism, but to the religious idealism of the Greeks. Such a belief would seem to them both crude and materialistic, and, as bringing the soul again into the bondage of the earthly body, would contradict their craving for redemption from the flesh. But this belief did not express St. Paul's view. He too held that 'corruption cannot inherit incorruption'.[2] The resurrection body which he proclaimed was not the human flesh reanimated, but a body of a spiritual kind, and much of the obscurity of this chapter is due, as it has been said, to this, that he was 'fighting on a double front',[3] at once protesting against the cruder Jewish view, and opposing the view of those who denied the resurrection altogether.

It is this which gives this chapter its special interest and importance. Much in it is Jewish. Thus we

[1] So Dan. xii. 2. So in Enoch li. 1 we read 'And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it. And Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, And hell shall give back that which it owes'. So *4 Ezra* vii. 32. 'And the earth shall restore those that sleep in her, and the dust those that are at rest therein.' Cp. Rev. xx. 12 f. This view finds expression in the phrase found in the early forms of the Apostles' Creed (which is still used in the form of the Apostles' Creed prescribed in the Baptismal Service in the *Book of Common Prayer*) 'the Resurrection of the Flesh'. Cp. the interesting account of the history of this phrase given by H. D. A. Major in *The Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body*, 1922 —in answer to the question of heresy raised against him.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 50. No word so well expresses the highest Greek idea of immortality as that which St. Paul here employs, 'incorruptibility', *ἀφθαρσία*. The influence of this Greek idea is to be found not only in Philo, but in Wisdom (e.g. ii. 23, 'God created man for incorruption'). Cp. vi. 19.

[3] J. Weiss, *Comm. in loc.*, p. 345.

have the familiar symbol of the trumpet whose sound shall announce the end,[1] and we have apparently the Apocalyptic idea of an intermediate Kingdom to be ruled over by the Messiah between the time of His appearance in glory and the end of all things.[2] Yet the chapter advances beyond Jewish eschatology to a view which is neither Jewish nor Greek, but Christian. The body which is raised up will not be this earthly body revivified. It will be a body which God will give us. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.'[3] The resurrection body will be spiritual, not natural. It will derive its source, not from natural descent from Adam, but from the risen Christ who is a life-giving spirit. Even now we are meant to 'bear the image of the heavenly'.[4] Our life on earth should be lived for the eternal, and thus catch already something of the radiance of the life to come. Difficult as is this idea of a 'spiritual body', it expresses as no other phrase available for St. Paul at that time could have done the distinctively Christian conception of the resurrection life. It is a conception which is free from all materialistic conceptions, and yet, at the same time, asserts, not a mere continuation of existence, but

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 52.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 24 f. *4 Ezra* vii. 28 gives the length of this period as 400 years, Rev. xx. 4 as 1000 years. St. Paul, under the influence of Apocalyptic conventions, apparently held that it was in this period that the saints who will meet Christ at His coming (1 Thess. iv. 17) will judge the angels (1 Cor. vi. 3, cp. Rev. xx. 4) and reign with Him (1 Cor. iv. 8, cp. Rev. xx. 6).

[3] Cp. Mark xii. 25, Luke xx. 36, where our Lord, in answer to the Sadducees, denies the crude view of the resurrection which they describe, and asserts that 'those who rise from the dead shall be as the angels in heaven'.

[4] *V.* 49, reading with many of the best MSS. *φορέσωμεν* 'let us bear' instead of *φορέσομεν* 'we shall bear'.

the full affirmation and expression of perfected personality.

To his Gentile hearers, stranger even than the details of his exposition must have seemed St. Paul's unhesitating confidence about the life to come. For many pagan thinkers of that time immortality was only a wistful surmise. To St. Paul it was a fact vouched for already by present experience. Through the Resurrection of Christ, death will be 'swallowed up in victory'. And this victory did not belong to the future alone. Christians were already redeemed in part from the tyranny of death, and, in part, shared in the final victory of Christ. We come here very near to the centre of St. Paul's religion. The Apocalyptic details, such as those given in the Epistles to the Thessalonians, belonged to his Jewish heritage, and were only on the circumference of his Christian thought. In his later Epistles, he makes no use of the grandiose imagery of Apocalypse, and, instead, contents himself with speaking of the Christian hope. But the Resurrection of Christ, and the consummation of our life in Him remained central to his faith. Without this certainty, all his life would have been a tragic blunder. 'If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable.'

Such words have been much condemned. But St. Paul is not speaking like a spoilt child, who will not be good without a bribe. He would not have said, as Luther did, 'If you believe in no future life, I would not give a mushroom for your God. Do then as you like. For, if no God, then no devil, no hell. As with a fallen tree, all is over when you die. Then plunge into lechery, rascality, robbery and murder.'[1] As the

[1] Quoted by A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality*, 1922, p. 181.

Old Testament reminds us, men have lived devout and noble lives, though uncheered by the hope of immortality. But the distinctive confidence and abandon of St. Paul's faith were inseparably connected with his faith in the resurrection. Christians were so one with Christ, that, if Christ rose, then they must share with Him in the glory of His risen life. If Christ rose not, then there was only a dead Christ to preach. A dead Christ could not save, and so St. Paul's preaching and his faith were, indeed, 'in vain'. The future to which he looked was not a future which would give him in abundance those material blessings which, as a missionary, he had renounced. It was a future in which his present experience of salvation would reach its consummation, for he would be altogether 'with Christ'. Lives of rectitude and service have been lived without belief in immortality. But such a life as his could not be lived, unless he knew that his 'labour was not vain in the Lord'. Without the certainty of the future, his present experience would have been insecure.

St. Paul returns to the discussion of the resurrection body in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. As we have seen, that Epistle was written at a time when, in St. Paul's expectation of Christ's return, the 'soon' was in equilibrium with the 'not yet'. In the First Epistle, St. Paul had taught that at Christ's coming, the dead would rise 'incorruptible', and share with those still living a glorious transformation. But when the Second Epistle was written, the problem of those dead before Christ's return had become too urgent for him to be content with this casual reference. The peril to which he had been exposed in Asia had made him realize that he himself might be among those dead.

Would his soul at death be 'naked, lingering on, unclothed by any body, until the time when Christ returned'? As St. Paul pondered on this problem, that seemed to him impossible. There would be no interruption of the communion with Christ begun on earth. Now we walk by faith, not right, but at death we shall be 'at home with the Lord'. When we quit this earthly body, it will not be to pass into some dim world of the dead, peopled by naked souls. At once, the soul will obtain a spiritual body, 'a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens'. Such words most naturally mean that St. Paul had transcended his earlier view that the believing dead will be dead until the time of Christ's return. Instead, at death, our soul will receive a 'spiritual body', or, in more modern speech, we shall have our personality perfected, that so, at once, we may pass into full and glorious communion with the risen Christ.[1]

It is this discovery which accounts for the glad confidence with which St. Paul, when a prisoner at Rome, could face the probability that he would be put to death before the time of Christ's return. He had now no fear of dying, for, at death, he would be with Christ, which for himself would be better far.[2] When our Lord was asked by the Sadducees about the life to come, He based His certainty of its reality on this, that 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living'.[3]

[1] 2 Cor. v. 1–8. Kennedy, who denies that there is any change in St. Paul's Eschatology in 1 and 2 Corinthians, interprets the passage 'as a hint of St. Paul's earnest desire and hope of surviving to the Parousia, and so escaping the terrifying experience of death' (*St. Paul's Conceptions of the Last Things*, p. 266), but in the context this explanation seems inadequate.

[2] Phil. i. 23.

[3] Mark xii. 27.

The God with whom the patriarchs communed was not a God who would allow that communion to be stopped by death. It is this same fully Christian view which St. Paul's words express. Already he was in communion with Christ, and that communion would be, at death, not interrupted, but consummated. Yet still the hope of Christ's return remained. He waited for the Saviour, 'the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory'.[1]

If death brings at once to the believer the perfection of his Christian experience, then the resurrection of believers seems to lose much of its meaning, and many have judged that the later developments of St. Paul's thought make it a superfluous conception. But such a view ignores the corporate character of St. Paul's Christian hope. He longed, not only for the completion of his own experience of salvation, but for Christ's final victory, and he could not be content until that victory was manifested. It is this hope that his expectation of Christ's return and of the resurrection of believers expressed. Once again, we have to remember that St. Paul was not a leisured theologian, but a 'working missionary', interested in speculation only in so far as it was required by his own experiences and his missionary work, and of a fully articulated theory it is impossible to speak.

V. The Judgement of Believers

In the Greek world it was inevitable that St. Paul should find himself compelled to defend the doctrine of the resurrection of believers and be driven to explain what he meant by the resurrection body. There was

[1] Phil. iii. 21.

another problem, less speculative and more pressing, the problem of the judgement of believers. We have seen how St. Paul's glad confidence in God's prevenient and all-sufficient grace led him to speak at times as if for Christians Sin and Flesh had lost their power to harm. Yet even in his own earnest and devoted life he found this was not so. He had to buffet his body, lest he himself should be rejected.[1] He had to press on if he would attain the goal of his high calling.[2] If that was true even for himself, it is not surprising that many of his converts from paganism failed to show in their lives the moral effect of that liberation which as Christians they professed to have received. St. Paul could write hopefully of the Lord Jesus Christ confirming Corinthian Christians unto the end that they might be 'unreproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ'.[3] The Christian Gospel was adequate for every need, but, in face of the gross misconduct of some of these converts, it was impossible for him to suppose that they would be without reproach. Thus the expectation of the future had in it not only hope but fear of judgement. We must all stand before the judgement-seat, there to be judged according to our works.[4]

St. Paul's retention of the idea of judgement by works seems, at first sight, to contradict his emphatic statements that the righteousness received by faith comes from God's grace, and is 'apart from works',[5] and some scholars hold that we have here 'a remnant of Jewish dogmatism unassimilated with the rest of

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27. [2] Phil. iii. 14. [3] 1 Cor. i. 8.

[4] 2 Cor. v. 10. Here the 'judgement-seat' is that of Christ. In Rom. xiv. 10 St. Paul speaks instead of 'the judgement-seat of God'.

[5] Rom. iii. 28.

Paul's teaching'.[1] But the contradiction seems more apparent than real. Sometimes, indeed, he does use terms which seem more appropriate to Pharisaism than to Christianity. Thus he speaks of each man receiving his 'reward' from God,[2] and claims that he has better grounds for 'boasting' than any other of the leaders of the Church.[3] Yet nowhere does he base his appeal on the attractions of a sensuous heaven, nor speak as if he looked to receive in the future compensations for the deprivations of his missionary life. The only reward he sought was the consummation of his present experience of salvation, to be completely free from the tyranny of sin and flesh, and thus to gain, not material benefits, but a fuller sonship with God, a more intimate communion with Christ, a richer possession of the Spirit. As in this life the supreme gift of the Spirit was the reproduction of the love of Christ,[4] so the most prized joy in heaven would be to be with Him.[5] And although St. Paul spoke of 'boasting', he spoke as one who knew that, in the new way of salvation, all 'boasting' was excluded.[6] Before God can no flesh 'boast'.[7] When, in self-defence, he spoke as one boasting of his missionary labours, he knew that he was speaking as a 'fool'. If he had to 'boast', he would prefer to boast of his weaknesses through which Christ's strength had been more clearly shown.[8] In one thing alone would he 'boast'—in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ through which the world had been crucified unto him and he unto the world.[9] No

[1] So Pfleiderer, *Paulinism*, E.T., 1877, I, p. 267.
[2] 1 Cor. iii. 8, 14. [3] 2 Cor. xi., xii. [4] 1 Cor. xiii. 4–7.
[5] Phil. i. 23. [6] Rom. iii. 27.
[7] 1 Cor. i. 29. [8] 2 Cor. xii. 9–11. Cp. xi. 17.
[9] Gal. vi. 14.

Christian could 'boast' in his salvation, for we are saved by grace and not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.[1]

Whatever judgement by works there be, it is clear that, in St. Paul's view, salvation is not earned by 'works'. Eternal life is not the wage of virtue, but the free gift of God. Yet 'wage' there is. 'The wages of sin is death.'[2] At times, as in the passage to which this verse belongs, St. Paul speaks as if Christians were free from sin, and so exempt from sin's wage of death. As he contemplated on the grace of God in Christ, he could be sure that nothing could ever separate those whom God had called from His love in Christ Jesus our Lord. It was hard for him to believe that God would allow any who had received the Spirit to be utterly destroyed. Even when he had to advise the cutting off of the incestuous person from the fellowship of the Church, he hoped that, although the offender's flesh might be destroyed, his spirit would be saved in the day of the Lord.[3] God's judgements upon Christians were for chastening that they might not be condemned with the world.[4] Yet St. Paul had to warn his converts of the danger they were in, if they failed to show in their lives the fruits of the Spirit. If they sowed to the flesh of the flesh they would reap corruption. 'God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'[5] They needed, then, 'to cast off the works of darkness', and 'put on the Lord Jesus Christ';[6] to take heed that they did not 'receive the grace of God in vain'.[7] Otherwise God's grace would be frustrated, and their Saviour would become their judge.

[1] Eph. ii. 8. [2] Rom. vi. 23. [3] 1 Cor. v. 5.
[4] 1 Cor. xi. 32. [5] Gal. vi. 7 f. [6] Rom. xiii. 12 ff.
[7] 2 Cor. vi. 1.

We have here not only the antinomy of God's grace and man's freedom, but the permanent paradox of religion. No religion speaks with such glad confidence of the love of God as Christianity, and yet in Christianity, too, there is the recognition of the tremendous and immeasurable difference between the Holy and the 'profane'. Our Lord Himself, who spoke of the Father's free forgiveness of the prodigal, yet bade men fear Him who can cast both body and soul into hell, and, although He was 'meek and lowly in heart', yet spoke of Himself as the judge at the last dread Assize. Salvation is of God's grace. Yet we can make that salvation ineffective, and, by what we are, we shall be judged. Contradictory as may appear St. Paul's teaching on justification and on judgement, the contradiction is one inherent in Christian experience. We are meant, at once, to trust God's love, and yet to live as those who must appear before His judgement-seat. Grace rules, and yet acts go on to their effects. Our response to the Christian Gospel cannot be trust alone, but awe. God works in us, and yet 'with fear and trembling' must our salvation be worked out.[1]

VI. The Judgement of Unbelievers

Of the judgement on unbelievers St. Paul speaks but little. In a famous chapter in *4 Ezra*, Ezra's prayer to God that He would have mercy on the sinful receives the harsh reply, 'I will not concern myself about the creation of those who have sinned, or their death, judgement or perdition; but I will rejoice rather over the creation of the righteous, over their pilgrimage also and their salvation and their recom-

[1] Phil. ii. 12 f.

pense'.[1] St. Paul, too, was concerned more with the future glory of believers than with the doom of the impenitent, and yet such words do not express his attitude to those who did not know, or knowing, did not heed the Christian message. The love of Christ constrained him. He was Christ's ambassador beseeching men, on Christ's behalf, to be reconciled to God.[2] His work it was to lead men from this present evil age, ruled over by Sin and Wrath and Death and demons, into the new age where God is known as Father, where men may be already in Christ, and rejoice in part in the possession of the Spirit.

We have seen how sombrely St. Paul conceived of the conditions of this present age. Over those unredeemed by Christ, Wrath still reigned. Jews and Gentiles alike were without excuse, and to all evil-doers would there be rendered 'wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish'.[3] Actions go on to their effect, and Wrath would reach its full manifestation in the Judgement Day. In the earliest of his Epistles, his teaching here was little more than a reproduction of Apocalyptic Judaism. 'Flaming fire', 'vengeance to them that know not God', 'æonian destruction from the face of the Lord'[4]—such phrases were the commonplaces of Messianic expectation. It is impossible to derive from such vivid phrases any theory of the nature or duration of punishment. Destruction (ὄλεθρος) may mean annihilation, or life continued in misery; 'æonian' is not necessarily 'everlasting'.[5] St. Paul

[1] *4 Ezra* viii. 38 f.
[2] 2 Cor. v. 14, 20.
[3] Rom. ii. 9.
[4] 2 Thess. i. 8 ff.
[5] So in *Jubilees* v. 10 we read, 'they were bound in the depths of the earth for ever, until the day of the great condemnation', and in *1 Enoch* x. 10 eternal life is a period of five hundred years. 'They

speaks of punishment in the age to come. What that punishment will be, and whether it will ever terminate, he does not say.

Later, as St. Paul contemplated the glory of the Christian message, it would seem that there came to him a greater hope. It was from God, and God alone, that there had come that salvation which it was his joy to preach; and in God there was no lack. Retribution remained, and yet, not recompense, but love, was the final secret of God's providence. This hope is hinted at in 1 Corinthians, sternly as that Epistle speaks of retribution. In the great chapter on the resurrection, he speaks as if the salvation, which has come to the world through Christ, will be as universal in its influence as he judged that tyranny of sin to be which had begun with Adam's fall. Christ would perfect His work. At the end, God would be 'all in all'.[1] We have the same parallel between Adam and Christ in Romans v., where St. Paul declares that the work of Christ was far more than a mere undoing of Adam's fall.[2] The immediate reference of this passage is to those who through their faith have accepted the Gospel, but, elsewhere in this Epistle, St. Paul so emphasizes the greatness of God's grace as to imply that it can meet with no defeat. That love of God in Christ, from which no power in earth or height or depth can separate the Christian, is the love which orders the course of history, and St. Paul goes on to speak of the consummation of God's work being preceded, not as in 2 Thessalonians, by a world-wide apostasy, but by the reception into Christianity of the

hope to live an eternal life, and that each one of them will live five hundred years.'

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 20–8. [2] Rom. v. 14–21.

fullness of the Gentiles, so that, as a greater wonder still, all Israel shall be saved. The purpose of election is this: that God may have mercy upon all. So his dialectic passes into a pæan of praise. 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God'. 'Of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things. To him be the glory for ever.'[1]

This hope finds still bolder expression in the Epistles of the Captivity. Thus, in Colossians, he declares that the very purpose of God's indwelling in Christ was this, that He might 'reconcile all things unto himself, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens'.[2] We have the same idea expressed with fuller detail in Ephesians,[3] whilst, in Philippians, St. Paul asserts that the result of Christ's self-dedication to the Cross is this: that God has so highly exalted Him that throughout the whole universe 'every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.[4]

It is not easy to reconcile this confidence in the complete victory of God's grace in Christ with the preaching of the destruction which would befall the wicked at Christ's appearance. Some have supposed that the reconciliation is to be found in the Apocalyptic idea of a double judgement.[5] At Christ's appearance, the wicked will 'suffer punishment', being banished 'from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might'.[6] But that is not the end of all. When Christ's work shall be complete, there shall remain none who do not recognize His Lordship, so that God shall indeed be 'all in all'. Such an explanation is

[1] Rom. viii. 37 ff. and ix.–xi. [2] Col. i. 20. [3] Eph. i. 15–23.
[4] Phil. ii. 6–11.
[5] Cp. Feine, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*[3], p. 313 and 373 f.
[6] 2 Thess. i. 9.

possible; but it may be doubted if St. Paul ever reached so consistent a theory. For him, as for many a modern thinker, the antinomy of God's will and human freedom seems to have remained unsolved. When he contemplated the grace of God in Christ, he looked forward to its perfect victory. Yet there was the dreadful fact of human sin, and, even in his latest Epistles, side by side with his impassioned statements of his hope in the fulfilment of Christ's work, we have stern warnings that sinners cannot 'inherit the Kingdom' of Christ and God.[1]

Yet if we cannot confidently derive from St. Paul's words a doctrine of universal restoration, we can claim that his teaching is incompatible with the idea that, at the end of all things, any will be left unreconciled to God. Whether all will be restored to God, or whether some will so persist in evil as to frustrate God's grace and be destroyed, was probably no more clear to him than it is to many of us modern Christians. Will God's love in Christ be everywhere victorious, or will some so cut themselves off from God by their impenitence and choice of evil, that, in the end, they will become 'dead', and so pass into the void? The revelation of God in Christ provided for him no certain answer to this solemn question. Of one thing only he was sure. All will be 'for the glory of God'. And that glory of God we have seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The judgement-seat of God will be the judgement-seat of Christ. The God who will be our Judge is the God whose holy love has been revealed to men in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

[1] E.g. Eph. v. 5. Cp. Phil. iii. 19.

DETACHED NOTES

A. THE HEAVENLY MAN

If the interpretation of 1 Corinthians xv. 45–9, given on p. 74 f., beright, then in this passage St. Paul is not concerned to affirm the pre-existence of the Second Man, who is from heaven, but is merely contrasting the influence of Adam on his descendants with that of Christ on His followers. This is not the interpretation given by some distinguished scholars. Philo, in explanation of the twofold story of the creation of man given in Genesis, affirmed that the first man of Genesis i. 27 was 'heavenly', and 'spiritual', the second man of Genesis ii. 7, as made from the dust, was earthy; or, as he elsewhere puts it, the first man was the Ideal Man, the second, the historic Adam who sinned, and became the fleshly father of our race.[1] It has been claimed that St. Paul got here his idea of the Heavenly Man and so of the pre-existent Christ. If that be so, then St. Paul is not reproducing, but combating Philo's view, for he teaches 'that that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual'. Holtzmann, who admits that Paul's doctrine is not exactly Philonic, seeks to show that it grew out of the same stock as Jewish reflections on the Creation story, and sees in this doctrine the metaphysical background of his conception of Christ.[2] Johannes Weiss points out that St. Paul's conception differs from that of Philo in that it is eschatologically conditioned, and makes the interesting suggestion that St. Paul uses the word Man in an emphatic sense so that the Man from heaven is a less barbarous translation

[1] The relevant passages from Philo are conveniently given in Lietzmann, *Comm. in loc. H.B.N.T.*

[2] *Lehrbuch der neutestamentlichen Theologie* [2], 1911, p. 61.

from Aramaic into Greek than that given in the Gospels as *ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου*, the Son of Man.[1] Bousset sees in this passage 'the influence of a widespread myth of a pre-existent Godlike man, traces of which are to be found also in Judaism, as e.g. in Philo'.[2] While admitting the distinctiveness of Paul's conception, he claims that 'we have at least here parallel ethnic ideas which, for the first time, explain and unlock for us the essence of the Pauline mystic speculation'.[3] Reitzenstein states, 'I am convinced that Paul has used for the development of his conception of Christ a conception already found in Hellenistic and in Palestinian Judaism and derived ultimately from Iranian sources, of a divine Anthropos (Man) as the bearer of the true religion'.[4] Such explanations seem to give a quite undue importance to St. Paul's use of the term 'Second Man', or 'Man from Heaven'. St. Paul's reference is not to the nature of the pre-existent Christ, but to the effect of the work of the incarnate and post-incarnate Christ, and it seems gratuitous to suppose that he reached his idea of the pre-existence of Christ from this conception of the Heavenly Man which scholars thus variously interpret.

B. THE MYTHS OF THE REDEEMER-GODS

If we reject the primitive Christian faith that in Jesus there was one who is inexplicable by merely human categories, who

[1] *Urchristentum*, pp. 374 ff. [2] *S.N.T.*[2], II, p. 161.
[3] *Kyrios Christos*[2], p. 143.
[4] *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*[3], 1927, p. 423. Reitzenstein here admits that Paul's use of the phrase was modified by his piety. In his *Poimandres*[2], pp. 81–99, he gives what he regards as the original form of a pagan Discourse on this God Anthropos, which he discovers in Hippolytus' description of the tenets of the Naassenes (*Refutation of all Heresies*, V, ii. and iii.), and on pp. 328–38 he gives a critical edition of the first section of the Hermetic writings (the *Poimandres*), in which a similar myth is found. (For text and E.T. of this section, see W. Scott, *Hermetica*, I, pp. 114–33.) On the whole subject of *St. Paul and the Conception of the 'Heavenly Man'*, see H. A. A. Kennedy's incisive article with this title in the *Exp.*, Feb. 1914.

did, indeed, rise from the dead, and was thus the founder of a religion which is all the world's concern, then the ascription to Him of Lordship within a few years, and even, it may be, a few months, after His ignominious death by men, who, as Jews, had been strict monotheists, presents a problem of so unique a kind, that inevitably the attempt has to be made to derive this belief from alien sources. The attempt of older scholars to assign this supposed transformation of Christianity to the dialectic of St. Paul is to-day generally abandoned. As Wrede put it, 'the magnificent assurance, confidence and enthusiasm of Paul's faith would be utterly unintelligible if its foundation was a conception which he had himself excogitated'.[1] As we saw, Wrede himself explained St. Paul's faith in Christ as the product of a Christ-dogmatic which he had while still a Jew. His conversion consisted in this: that he transferred to Jesus all the attributes which he had learnt to assign to the heavenly Christ.[2] That explanation, too, has proved impossible. The Jewish Apocalypses can readily be studied, and it is clear that we cannot find in them any conception of the Messiah or Son of Man comparable to that which St. Paul had of his Lord.

There remains only one other source from which to derive the full faith in Christ of the early Church, and to-day it is fashionable to explain the ascription to Jesus of Lordship by the influence of paganism, and especially of the mystery-cults in which, as we are told, initiates not only called their special cult-god, Lord (*Kyrios*) but thought of him as a redeemer-god who had died and risen again, and thus had opened the way of salvation to all who by their union with him shared in his death and resurrection.

Thus stated the suggestion is a very attractive one, and it is not surprising that those who hear the mystery-cults so described should feel that here at last is the explanation of the classic Christian faith in Christ. But it is necessary first to see if the facts permit of so simple and 'Christian' a summary of the meaning of these cults.

[1] *Paul*, E.T., p. 150. [2] Cp. p. 151 f. See earlier, p. 32.

It is generally recognized that the paganism of the first century of the Christian era was not the earlier paganism of Greece or Rome, but a paganism enriched by Oriental cults, which were better able to meet the craving for redemption which marked that sombre age.

In Greece itself there was less need of alien cults, for, at an early period, the Athenians had embodied into their religion the Mysteries of Eleusis, which later had been open, not to Athenians only, but to all Greek-speaking peoples. Because the rites at Eleusis were mysteries, we know little of them. They seem to have included, not only the exposure to the initiate of certain sacred objects,[1] but also, as many scholars think, the performance of a sacred drama in which was depicted the quest of the goddess Demeter for her daughter who was lost in the underworld. These mysteries obtained great influence. Thus Cicero speaks of men coming from the most distant parts of the earth to be initiated at 'the sacred and august Eleusis'.[2] He was himself an initiate, and refers to these mysteries with high praise. Through them, he says, 'we have learnt, indeed, the principles of life', and he speaks of them as providing not only 'a way of living', but 'a better hope for dying'.[3] Outside the official religion was the orgiastic cult of Dionysus, a Thracian god early introduced into Greek religion. Later this worship was, it is believed, combined with the Orphic mysteries, and, in the opinion of some scholars, this worship, thus refined, was brought into connexion with the Eleusinian mysteries.

In the Roman Empire, outside Greece, the Oriental cults assumed great importance. Thus slaves, merchants and wandering priests from Syria brought the knowledge of the youthful Adonis, who, killed by a wild boar, was bemoaned by the goddess Aphrodite (Astarte), and at Byblos in Phœnicia

[1] If the evidence of Hippolytus is to be trusted, chief of these was 'an ear of corn in silence reaped' (*Refutation of All Heresies*, V, iii., E.T., *Ante-Nicene Library*, I, p. 147)—a natural emblem for a 'vegetation-goddess' of fertility like Demeter.

[2] *De natura deorum*, I, 119. [3] *Leg. II*, 36.

the drama of her sorrow was enacted before worshippers who, sharing in her grief, shared also in her joy when Adonis was restored again to life.[1]

From Egypt came the cult of Isis and Osiris (or Serapis). This won such great popularity in Rome that no persecution could repress it, and, in the end, the cult was recognized. Caligula built a great temple to these Egyptian gods, and, from the time of Domitian, every pagan emperor gave this cult his patronage.

We have seen with what bitter contempt Juvenal in his sixth satire speaks of the mortifications endured by the devotee of Isis.[2] In the same satire, he describes Isis as a 'procuress',[3] for, apparently, her temples were found convenient for purposes of vice. Yet Juvenal's attacks are in themselves a proof of the influence of this cult, and a high-minded man like Plutarch describes its myth with sympathy, and speaks of its mysteries as founded by Isis in order that they might provide a 'lesson of piety and consolation for men and women beset with like misfortunes',[4] whilst Apuleius devotes the last book of his *Metamorphoses* to a respectful description of his hero's initiation into the mysteries of Isis and Osiris.

The myth which this cult embodies is yet another myth of a dying god. Osiris, the brother and husband of Isis, brought by his just rule peace and prosperity to Egypt. His brother Typhon was envious of him, and sought his death. This he secured by inducing Osiris, by a trick, to enter a chest which was then thrown into the Nile. The chest drifted away to Byblos in Phœnicia where it was found at length by Isis and brought back to Egypt. Typhon secured possession of the corpse, which he cut into fourteen pieces which were scattered far and wide. Isis sought eagerly to recover these pieces.

[1] These rites are described by Lucian, a second-century writer, in his *De dea syria* 6 (E.T. by Garstang, *The Syrian Goddess*, 1913, p. 45 f.).

[2] See earlier, p. 152.

[3] vi. 489.

[4] *On Isis and Osiris*, xxvii. (This work is edited with German trans. by Parthey, 1850.)

When she had found them all, the body was restored to life. Horus, Osiris' son, defeated Typhon, and reigned in his stead, whilst Osiris went to rule in the underworld.

From Asia Minor came the cult of Cybele, the Great Mother, and of Attis, her husband. The story of Attis' death is told in various forms. In one of the commonest, he perished through his own act, having castrated himself under a pine tree in penitence for having been unfaithful to Cybele.[1] The cult connected with this myth was introduced into Rome in 204 B.C., in the hope that the Great Goddess would help to secure victory for Rome in its struggle against Carthage. The cult offended the Romans by its cruelty, and, for long, no Roman was allowed to join its priesthood. Later, its rites acquired great influence, and festivals were held from March 15th–27th. On March 24th, the 'day of blood', the death of Attis was re-enacted by the wild lacerations of the eunuch priests, whilst, as many scholars believe, those who were entering the priesthood made on this day the sacrifice of their virility. The next day was a day of joy, for, at the coming of spring, Attis was believed to be aroused from death. Such rites were public, but there were also 'mysteries' connected with this cult of the details of which very little is known.

Noblest of all the Oriental cults was that of Mithra, the Persian God.

The worship of the god whom the *Avesta* calls Mithra and the *Rigveda* Mitra is clearly very ancient, going back to the time before the Aryan invasion of India. The *Gathas*, which preserve the teaching of Zoroaster, make no mention of Mithra. That cannot be that Zoroaster was ignorant of him. More likely, it is a sign that Zoroaster found his power too great to be attacked. In the later *Avesta*, Mithra is one of the most important of divinities, and to his praise a long *Yasht* is devoted in which, as a god of light, he is described as the all-seeing lord

[1] In another form of the myth, the death of Attis is assimilated to that of Adonis, and he is said to have been killed by a wild boar; in yet another form, Cybele is said to have killed him out of jealousy.

of truth. To him men sacrifice cattle and small birds, and, before they drink libations in his honour, endure scourgings that so they may expiate their sins.[1]

Mithraism, as a separate religion, owed much to Babylonian influence, and, in Asia Minor, came into connexion with the worship of the Great Goddess. Yet, unlike the other cults we have been studying, Mithraism remained free from sensuality and sexual associations, and retained the vigorous ethical dualism of Persian religion. Spread at first chiefly by the humble, Mithraism, in the second and third centuries of our era, obtained great influence, and, early in the fourth century, Mithra was proclaimed by Diocletian, Galerius and Licinius as 'the protector of their empire'.

It is doubtful to what extent Mithraism was found in St. Paul's age and place. Christianity, it has been said, 'spread at first among the cities of the Mediterranean, where there were colonies of Jews'. On the other hand, outside Italy, Mithraism 'followed the line of the camps and the centres of commerce, chiefly along the great rivers of the northern frontier'.[2]

Central in the representations of Mithraism is his slaying of the bull. The meaning of this myth is still obscure. It is probably connected with the revival of vegetation. In the later development of the cult there were Mithraic mysteries, whose rites seemed to some of the Christian fathers diabolic parodies of the Christian sacraments.[3] Of these mysteries we know little. There were apparently grades of initiation, and from Tertullian's reference to an image of a resurrection (*imago resurrectionis*) [4] it would seem that in these mysteries too there was a simulated death. We have little evidence for the existence of such mysteries so early as St. Paul's time, and Cumont, the greatest authority on Mithraism, asserts that, at

[1] Yasht x. 119–122. There is a brief account of the Mitra of the *Rigveda*, and the Mithra of the *Avesta* in the present writer's *Living Religions of the East*, 1921, pp. 19–23 and 76 f.

[2] Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 622.

[3] See later, p. 272 f.

[4] *On Prescription against Heretics*, xl.

that period, the Mithraic mysteries 'had no importance whatever'.[1] It is possible that this should not be over-emphasized. It is to Archæology chiefly that we owe our knowledge of the diffusion of Mithraism later, and it is possible that fresh discoveries may show that it was already influential in Paul's time, if not in Greece, where men were naturally reluctant to accept a religion connected with their ancient enemies, the Persians, then, at least, in some of the other Mediterranean lands where Christianity won its first successes. It is to be noted that we cannot speak of Mithra as a 'dying and rising god'. He won men's gratitude by slaying the bull; his myth says nothing of his death and resurrection.

It is clear from this brief statement of the facts that it is only with very great reserve that we can speak of the widespread myth of a Redeemer-God who died and rose again and in whose death and resurrection initiates participated. The myths of Adonis, Osiris and Attis are connected with the decay and revival each year of vegetation, and the story of their deaths bears no obvious resemblance to that of the death of Christ. Adonis and Osiris were the victims of their fate; Attis, in the common form of the myth, perished by his own rash act. Nor can we speak of the 'resurrection' of these gods as if that resurrection had a meaning comparable to that which St. Paul gives to the resurrection of Christ. And in Mithra's slaying of the bull it is hard to find any real analogy to the Christian conception of the work which Christ did for men.

C. SACRAMENTS IN THE MYSTERY-RELIGIONS

In an often quoted passage, Tertullian complains that the devil 'by the mystic rites of his idols, vies even with the essential portions of the sacraments of God. He, too, baptizes some—that is, his own believers and faithful followers; he promises the putting away of sin by a laver; and, if my memory still serves me, Mithra there set his marks on the foreheads of his soldiers; celebrates also the breaking of bread, and introduces an image of a resurrection, and before a sword wreathes a

[1] *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, E.T., 1911, xx.

crown'.[1] It is doubtful if we have here a precise description of the Mithraic rites. We seem to have rather a description of them by a Christian writer who is interpreting them from a Christian standpoint. The Mithraism here described is not the Mithraism of St. Paul's time, but the Mithraism of the end of the second century.

The evidence for the existence of sacraments in the mystery-religions so early as St. Paul's time is very slight. Even of the rites of later times we know but little. Tertullian tells us that 'washing is the channel through which they (i.e. pagans) are initiated into some sacred rites—of some notorious Isis or Mithra'. 'At the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration, and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries.'[2] In spite of Tertullian's statement, it is not easy to find in the mystery-cults clear evidence for a baptism which meant regeneration even so late as his time, and, for St. Paul's period, the evidence seems entirely lacking.[3]

The fullest account of initiation into the mysteries is given us by Apuleius in his account of the initiation of Lucius into the rites of Isis. In it we are told that the priest of Isis took

[1] *On Prescription against Heretics*, xl. So Justin Martyr, writing at about A.D. 150, states that 'wicked devils' have imitated the Eucharist 'in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same things to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you may either know or can learn'. (*Apology*, lxvi.)

[2] *On Baptism*, v. (Translations are from the *Ante-Nicene Library*).

[3] In the second edition (1920) of his *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*, p. 85, Reitzenstein laid great stress on a papyrus letter (P. Par. 47 [13]) of the second century B.C., in which he claimed to provide a proof of the connexion of baptism with salvation. In the third edition (1927), p. 207, in deference to Wilcken, he abandons this claim. Moulton and Milligan (*The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, Part II, 1915, p. 102) remark of this papyrus, 'The translation of the letter, which is very illiterate, is by no means clear, but *βαπτιξόμεθα* must mean "flooded" or, overwhelmed with calamities'. The quotation is thus irrelevant.

Lucius to the baths, and, asking pardon from the gods, washed him, and purified his body according to custom. It is doubtful if this ablution was more than a formal cleansing. It was not in itself the act of initiation. Not until ten days after did the priest bring Lucius into 'the most secret and sacred place of the temple' for his initiation, and that initiation consisted, not in baptism, but in the vision of things which might not be uttered.[1] It is to be remembered that Apuleius wrote in the second century of our era. We do not know whether the rites he describes existed in St. Paul's time. But it is clear that we cannot find in this reference a view of baptism as in itself a source of salvation, such as scholars of the 'Religio-historical' School claim that St. Paul derived from pagan mysteries.

Of more significance is the initiates' share in the sorrow of the goddess at the death of her husband or paramour, and in her joy at his restoration to some kind of life.

Firmicius Maternus, a Christian Apologist of the fourth century, tells us of a festival in which an image of a god was laid upon a bed. Those present joined in responsive weeping. 'When they are satiated with their simulated grief, a light is brought. Then the throats of all who wept were anointed by the priest and, when this has been done, he whispers in a gentle murmur:

"Rejoice, *mystae* of the god who is saved.
For to you there will be salvation (*σωτηρία*) from troubles".'[2]

It is believed by many scholars that this has reference to the mysteries of Attis. Elsewhere, according to one text, this writer speaks of the initiate of Attis as of 'one about to die'.[3]

[1] *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*), XI. xxiii. (The text and E.T. is conveniently given in the Loeb Library edition, on which our account is based.)

[2] *De errore profanarum religionum*, xxii.

[3] *Op. cit.*, xviii.; for *moriturus*, 'about to die', of Ziegler's edition (Leipzig 1907), Halm in the Vienna edit. of 1867 prefers the alternative reading *introiturus*, 'about to enter'.

If this text be correct, then initiation was conceived as, in some sense, a share in the death of the god.[1]

Most imposing of all these mystic rites was the *taurobolium*, the bath of blood, in which the initiate stood beneath a platform on which a bull was killed, and thus became drenched with the bull's blood. The origin of this rite is still obscure. The evidence for it dates only from the middle of the second century, and in connexion with the worship of the Great Mother, Cybele. Sometimes, instead of a bull, a ram was slain.[2] In the opinion of many scholars, this 'bath of blood' was later incorporated into Mithraism. However that may be, the rite became later of great importance, and several inscriptions have been found which connect this 'bath of blood' with regeneration. Some speak of those thus immersed as reborn for twenty years; others, as reborn for eternity (*renatus in æternum*). Such words have a Christian sound, but it has to be remembered that none of the inscriptions which thus speak of rebirth in connexion with the *taurobolium* are earlier than the fourth century, and many scholars hold that this interpretation of the rite was due to Christian influence.

In view of the confidence with which St. Paul's interpretation of the Lord's Supper has been derived from the Mystery-religions, it is strange to find how trivial is the evidence for the existence in St. Paul's time of sacramental meals in connexion with the Mysteries. Even Reitzenstein admits that 'only baptism, and not the Lord's Supper, can so far be compared with non-Christian counterparts'.[3] The nearest parallel which he can find to what he holds to be St. Paul's teaching here is a reference in a magical papyrus to Osiris giving to Isis and Horus his blood to drink in order that he may not be forgotten after death. In the recent third edition of his book, he now

[1] So in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI. xxi. the high priest of Isis describes initiation as a symbol of voluntary death (*ad instar voluntariæ mortis*).

[2] The *criobolium*.

[3] *Die Hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*[3], p. 81.

admits that such references 'would only gain importance if we could prove the existence of something similar in the sacrificial use'.[1] And that he cannot do. The attempt to prove that St. Paul took over from the mysteries the idea of 'eating the god', or 'drinking his blood', has broken down. We saw that there was no reason to suppose that this was the view of St. Paul, and there is no evidence to show that such barbaric ideas existed in the Græco-Orientalism of his time, whether within, or without, the mysteries.

Sacred meals there were in which the god seems to have been regarded as host or guest. Thus we have these two striking references in second-century papyri. 'Chæremon invites you to dine at the table of the Lord Serapis, to-morrow, the 15th, at nine o'clock.' 'Antonius, Ptolemæus' son, invites you to dine with him at the table of the Lord Serapis, in the Serapeum of Claudius, on the 16th, at nine o'clock.'[2]

Of the nature and import of meals connected with the mystery-religions our only evidence comes from obscure references in Christian writers. We have already given the references of Justin Martyr and Tertullian to the Mithraic meal in which they saw a parody of the Eucharist. Representations have been discovered in bas-relief of Mithra seated at a table, and it is possible that they depict a sacramental meal, although this is denied by some scholars. Clement of Alexandria, in a contemptuous reference to the mysteries of Eleusis, quotes the words, 'I have fasted, I have drunk the cup; I have received from the box; having done, I put it into the basket, and out of the basket into the chest'. In another passage, apparently in reference to the mysteries of Attis, he quotes the words, 'I have eaten out of the drum, I have drunk out of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 80. The passage he quotes (cp. *op. cit.*, 2nd edit., pp. 244 f.), is from Griffith, *The demotic magical papyrus of London and Leiden*, p. 107.

[2] The word translated 'table' is in both these inscriptions rather 'divan' (κλείνη). The evidence for these cult meals is conveniently given in Angus, *The Mystery Religions and Christianity*, 1925, pp. 128 ff., or in Lietzmann, *H.B.N.T. An die Korinther*[2], pp. 50 f.

cymbal, I have carried the *kernos*, I have stepped into the bridal chamber'.[1] Firmicius Maternus gives a similar quotation, 'I have eaten out of the drum, I have drunk from the cymbal; I am an initiate of Isis'.[2] The meaning of these mystic utterances is still uncertain. From the context in which this last quotation is given, it is clear that this fourth-century apologist believed that this sacred meal connected with the Attis cult resembled the Eucharist in that the initiate partook of food and drank from a cup.

As we saw, there is unambiguous evidence that some of St. Paul's converts from paganism thought of the Sacraments in a partly pagan way.[3] We do not know if there existed at Corinth in St. Paul's time mystery-cults with sacraments such as we have described. If so, then it is possible that it was from them that these converts got their pagan misconceptions. But for this there is as yet no evidence. In 1 Corinthians x. 16–21, the pagan feast with which St. Paul compares 'the table of the Lord' appears to be not a meal connected with the mystery-religions, but a public pagan sacrificial feast, whilst if pagans had learnt of the Lord's Supper as St. Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians xi. 23–26, they would probably have associated it, not with the secret meal of initiation into the mysteries, but with their festivals held in commemoration of a dead kinsman. In later times, Christian writers spoke of the Sacraments as mysteries. Nowhere does St. Paul speak of Christian or of pagan rites as mysteries. St. Paul speaks often of the 'mystery' of Christianity, but with him it was not a secret rite, or 'a secret doctrine known only to the initiated, which they are not at liberty to disclose'.[4] With him, a mystery was 'not a secret which must be kept secret. On the contrary, it

[1] *Exhortation to the Heathen*, II, 21 and 15. The word translated bridal chamber (παστός) may also mean 'bridal-bed'. Some form of mystic marriage seems implied.

[2] *De err. profan. relig.* xviii.

[3] See earlier, pp. 234 ff.

[4] Moulton and Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, V, 1924, p. 420.

is a secret which God wills to make known, and has charged His Apostles to declare to those who have ears to hear it'.[1] The mystery of Christianity was for him the mystery of God's saving will revealed in Christ.

[1] J. A. Robinson, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 240.

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